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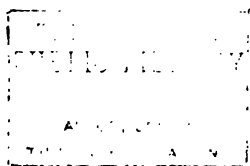


THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

LA SAISIAZ

DRAMATIC IDYLS—JOCOSERIA











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The Complete Works of
Robert Browning

Volume XI

The Agamemnon of Aeschylus
La Saisiaz
Dramatic Idyls
Iocoseria



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Athenians had such a quarry on their property, but they constructed better roads for the conveyance of material.' Without abandoning his own original pathfinding or leaving unworked the unusual quarry on his own property, Browning made himself far more familiar with the Greek knack of road-construction as evinced in the domain of the drama than most English poets who have painfully sought all their lives to enrich their art-expression with the Hellenic secret. As readers of the transcripts from Euripides have reason to know, Browning's study of Euripides involved a plunge to the depths of other Greek dramatists.

A sympathetic reconstruction of Greek life and a vivid apprehension of it as a fluent and lively human product, instead of a museum-labelled specimen, was the outcome. The Gothic poet found out all the Gothic possibilities there were in Hellenism. In the serener beauty of the style of Sophocles taken arbitrarily as the type of all Greek art, the marked individualities in genius of his compeers were wont to be overwhelmed. In Browning's Greek poems distinct characterizations of Euripides and Aristophanes emerged. Six years later than his last work on Euripides, at sixty-five, in "life's November," indeed, came this translation of *Æschylus*, and in this the Father of Greek Tragedy also peered out in his grand native roughness through the alien veils of smoothness belonging to the Sophoclean Greek type. Although no word of comment helps the portrayal, the rugged sincerity of the version suffices to reveal him. The innuendo-pregnant dialogue is accompanied, moreover, by an honest attempt to mirror the uneven strophes of the chorus of *Æschylus*.

The same difficulties that beset the appreciation of the original belong to this translation; but already many readers will prefer to any other smoother English metrical version a translation rigorously faithful "without amplification or embellishment," in "as Greek a fashion as English will bear," to every turn of phrase in the original. That there will be many more to treasure so uncompromising a translation in the future, the signs of the times tend to witness.

Of the second piece in this volume, "La Saisiaz," it may be said that since the digression in the third book of "Sordello," so direct an utterance of the poet to his general public has not been made. The subject, too, upon which he disburdens himself in his own person, is no slight one. Many of his readers will think it, doubtless, the most important one upon which he could speak to them face to face. "Does the soul survive the body? Is there God's self, no or yes?" These are the questions he proposes to ask and have an answer from himself, — "with no favor, with no fear," in "La Saisiaz," — How much, how little, do *I* inwardly believe that the soul's eclipse is not the soul's extinction?

The occasion upon which he is led to search his own mind thus frankly was a personal event — the sudden death of his almost life-long friend, Anne Egerton Smith. This he explains fully and openly, in his own person, at the beginning of the poem; and the cogitations the shock awakened in him are also given, with no vestige of the dramatic maskings and enrobings that elsewhere protect him from crude inferences. Here, at any rate, his readers find Browning himself in a confiding mood; and

what is it he tells them of the ground of his hope? Clearly that he, for his part, puts no reliance upon external revelation. At the outset he determines to forbear the self-deception implied in putting an answer in God's mouth. He refrains from passing off "human lisp as echo of the sphere-song out of reach." In this his manner and trend differ markedly from his brother-poet's point of view and general conclusion in "In Memoriam." To the sphere-song Tennyson as naturally and characteristically refers as Browning to the soul-whisper, to human weakness. It can only question weakness — itself, that is — and answer weakly, he admits, but not weakly ask. In that intensive human asking Browning centres the argument which Tennyson is more prone to hurl outward upon the diffusive power of the "rolling air." So, in the bare fact that a man need not weakly ask, but stoutly confront both his own weakness and the unsounded cosmos, the argument of "La Saisiaz" begins, and, after a vain attempt for a wider platform upon which to base his faith in immortality, there, also, it ends. With external revelation abjured or held in abeyance, internal revelation of his undying human soul's essence is confessed to constitute, for his part, the sole ground of his buoyant confidence in soul and God. The long argument, where Reason successively beats down Fancy's comfortable suppositions, as suppositions in which no real comfort can be taken, reaches this net result. All that it goes to prove, in a word, being that merely a confident hope in immortality, and not an absolute assurance of it, educes from man the best results in life and character. Further than this, all that the poet considers di-

rectly proved as to immortality as a fact is neither negation nor affirmation, but an open question. Two facts, self-assumed, impossible to prove or disprove, and therefore impossible not to assume, a self and an out-self, one called Soul, the other God, are the only facts Reason cannot gainsay. What alone, then, he does conclude is the spiritual desirableness for each man to cherish within himself the purpose in living which makes life worth while.

This summing up the poet calls sad but hopeful. Then a second part of the poem follows. In it his yearning to give other men who need it the advantage of the exuberant faith in that purpose in life supplied by trust in immortality, whose unprovableness he for his part so cheerfully accepts, finds a highly poetic and symbolic outlet. Unwilling to fool their reason; aware that there is no way to bridge the gap between one man's conviction and another's, and that each one must for himself alone solve this problem of the soul and its God; he yet desires to impregnate their hearts with his own spiritual good cheer. To this end he wishes for himself the genius and the magnetism of the variously gifted men whose lives, as it happens, have been associated with the neighborhood of "La Saisiaz," so that the fervor of his own hope might burn aloft with the convincing flame of all their combined gifts and persuasive mesmerism to light up the pathway of the hopeless millions of men amenable to such influence, and bring them beacons, through the larger outlook he has, of the far country of the eternal human soul.

More than a year before "La Saisiaz" was written, Browning wished it were true that he had "so

much of 'genius' as to permit the testimony of an especially privileged insight to come in aid of the ordinary argument" for immortality. Without even so much of a manifestation of superiority as inspires Whitman's conception of the office of the Poet as "Answerer," Browning has in "La Saisiaz" expressed his brotherly longing to be able to fill that position, but only for the sake of heartening the weaker brothers, without either deluding the reason of the stronger ones, who were not disposed to take "flare for evidence," or giving his own stanch hope any finer name than it deserves. Yet he did not underrate the prerogative of genius, — insight. When so modestly replying in the letter just cited, and quoted in full in the notes in this volume, to the correspondent who had thanked him for invigorating her faith, he added that he had himself "been aware of the communication of something more subtle than a ratiocinative process when the convictions of 'genius' thrilled" his soul to its depths. It may be suspected that he quietly put his correspondent's encouragement — probably received through reading poems more dramatic than "La Saisiaz" — on a different basis than that she supposed it to have, — a basis less rational but more potential. The drift of "La Saisiaz," at any rate, places the soul's assurance of its mission during this life and an unknown future on its own strength, with a dispassionate calm that satisfies the reason, and with an intuitional ardor fitted to educe each man's human best of aspiration and of joy.

Finally, in the concluding lines, the poet gives his readers an intimation still more confidential and personal, in the reference he makes to other

hours of travail in the face of death, when his grief was fiercer and his faith harder tested. Those sufferings are sacred. Of them and the spiritual fruit wrested from them he gives the only glimpse he can offer through the glass of this slighter sorrow.

By some mystery of metrical handling, the verse of "La Saisiaz" gives a much easier and less heated impression of its speaker than the similar verse of "Locksley Hall." The skimming lilt of the long eight-stressed line with its facile couplet rhymes, so serious in effect in Tennyson, seems here, in Browning, too light, at first hearing, for the grave theme. Yet it gives a sense of sustained control of a chain of thought little burdening the speaker. The reverie smoothly covers more poignant reminiscences; yet by the time the torch metaphor is reached, the long line pulses with nervous force.

The first series of the "Dramatic Idyls" did not immediately follow "La Saisiaz," the "Two Poets of Croisic" intervening chronologically. Yet once it has been noticed that death is faced in each one of these idyls, it may be questioned whether in conception at least they did not directly follow. Every one of these idyls faces death in some shape, but always at a moment of crisis intense with vigor and passion. Never in all Browning's robust life-loving work is there a creative moment more instinct with blood and breath than that of these idyls, published in his sixty-seventh year. They are all poems of the people, realistic of speech and scene, true to their title. Three of them are notably English, "Ned Bratts" especially is rank with the flavor of the yeomanry of the soil. The pristine Elizabethan heartiness survives in this, if in no other modern poem. The fun and burlesque of

this story of two sinners to be converted into saints for the eternal enjoyment of heaven by the hanging which is their due, is so broad and farcical that it ought to redeem Browning forever from the reproach of "metaphysical poet," too long forcing his genius into a strait-jacket it never really wore. As in English religious extravaganza, George Meredith's "Jump-to-Glory Jane" may be in the running with this brace of Bunyanite converts, roaring Ned Bratts and his big wife, Tab; but Hogarth and Dickens are the portrayers of the characteristically clownish with whom Browning's picture of that daft, sweating court scene best stands comparison. The diction of "Ned Bratts" is saturated with stout old Anglo-Saxon words, and brodered with quaint Bunyanisms, and the grossness of the reeking theme is made grotesquely beautiful and artistically effective by the anxious simplicity and sincerity with which the sinner-saints save themselves from the seductive perils of sinning in life by being "happily hanged."

"Halbert and Hob," a story of brutal heredity and the spark of pity struck out in the flinty hearts by the sudden mystical brush of death against them, is equally elemental, sterner in outline than the florid "Ned Bratts," but in its briefer, harder way, scarcely less pictorial. Metrically it is built on the same appropriately simple plan, a six-stressed line with couplet rhymes, full of muscular one-syllabled English.

The same strong couplet rhymes and explicit diction are used in the third English idyl, "Martin Relph;" but the line is longer, and the extra seventh stress seems to give the weak whine befitting the old man's confession. In this fine bit of

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thrilling story-telling, Martin's remorse and self-accusation are the ennobling traits. They are vitiated by a piteous but enfeebling sneakiness. He is half willing to appear convinced and to convince others who are charitably inclined that his lack of moral soundness was only superficially exposed at the crucial instant of which he tells, when death menaced the woman he secretly coveted, and that his moral failure then was trifling. That which he keeps almost back will not be quite kept back! It throws its sinister shadow over every half-revelation, and the result is a matchless character-sketch of self-betrayal. In this, as in "Ned Bratts," there is a lively background in which a few subsidiary characters are modelled with relief enough to be vivid without detracting from the central interest. The blustering bulgy-nosed Captain, authoritatively reading the peasantry its lesson of non-interference in matters of state, while, scared, huddled together on the hill-tops, these villagers await the punishment his redcoats are about to mete out to the quiet girl waiting there with pinioned arms and bandaged eyes; the frantic man, waving his white paper, unseen save by Martin Relph, stumblingly, staggeringly making his ineffectual progress at the foot of the hill like a person in a nightmare, — such pictures as these, inside the main picture, bear witness to the vitality of Browning's imaginative eyesight at sixty-seven.

A folk-picture as true to Russian peasant life as these English poems are to the yeoman heart of the poet's native land is painted in "Ivân Ivânovitch." There is an added effectiveness in the description of the dreary white landscape and black pine tracts cropping out above the snow; and there

is a realism almost painful, if it were not artistically so skilful, in the fleshly force of such bits, for example, as the feel of the fang of the wolf grinding the woman's shoulder, or the look of the blood-snake winding from her beheaded trunk to a hiding-place among the splinter-heaps. As in the preceding poems, so in this, the presence of death pierces the plausibilities of life, and reveals Lou'scha's weakness. Each time the "Satan-face" of the wolf overtook her sledge, she found herself incapable of the heroism the crudest humanity ruthlessly demands of all women who are mothers. As Mr. Symons has said, "Nothing could be more graphic and exciting than the description of the approach of the wolves: the effective change from iambs to anapæsts gives their very motion."

"Was that — wind?

Only the wind: yet, no — our breath goes up too straight!

Still the low sound, — less low, loud, louder, at a rate
There's no mistaking more! Shall I lean out —
look — learn

The truth whatever it be? Pad, pad! At last, I turn —

"'T is the regular pad of the wolves in pursuit of the
life in the sledge!

An army they are: close-packed they press like the
thrust of a wedge," etc.

And it is equally true that nothing could be more graphic and exciting than the description of Lou'scha's successive inward yieldings to the will of the green-brass eyes and nuzzling snout of the ravening wolves, her successive relapses into relief as, each child gone, she turns onward with new zest to the life and hope perchance still left her. Mar-

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tin Relph's audience, in its tender treatment of his reluctant self-accusations and its indulgent humoring of his murderous impulse by calling it fright, or cowardliness, or possibly self-defense, — since it might have cost him his life to do what he failed to do, — contrasts strongly with the prompt-judging Ivàn, whose axe so confidently decreed poor Louÿscha's sentence. Is it possible that the peasant crowd and the village dignitaries at the church step, who were so sure of God's will and Ivàn's enactment of it, and who found a mother's love of life so monstrous, would have listened leniently to a Russian Martin? The old priest's rejoinder to the Pomeschik's interposition against Ivàn's lynch law seems to imply that Browning was aware that any Martin would fare better than any Louÿscha.

Yet what doubt is there that the death of the suspected girl was due as clearly to Martin's instinctive hesitation for no reason at all but because of envy and native selfishness, as the wolves' seizure of Louÿscha's children was the result of her instinctive hesitation to sacrifice herself for them because of her sensuousness and native love of life?

Browning has not forgotten to push his contrasts in different ways of meeting death into unwonted regions, and to suggest quite new and striking inconsistencies in the common conception of what altruism is. The spontaneous heroism of the dog who saved the drowning child and her doll while a lot of unconcerned bystanders looked on, in the clever little poem "Tray," supplies some cynical comparisons at the expense of the human beings who unflinchingly award indulgence, condemnation, praise for selfishness or self-sacrifice.

So throughout these idyls the sentence of death or of release often tries the temper of the judge quite as much as the imminence of death tried the person who was judged. And while each of these idyls is interesting enough taken separately, if they be considered all together, as a related group, they yield further matter for the exercise of fine distinctions cleaving to the very marrow of life.

The story of Pheidippides, the Greek runner, — whose patriotic service for his beloved Athens seems not less glorious, through the poet's celebration of it, than that of Marathon's general, Miltiades, — presents both the hero and his country in a wrestle with death which elicits their hidden virtue. The crisis for Athens, when she seems to face utter extinction beneath the armed heel of Persia, involves a crisis of another sort for Sparta. The threat of Athens' death as Pheidippides makes it known to her Greek neighbor brings out her disposition unmistakably —

"O my Athens! — Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?

Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glitter of
gratified hate!"

The especial gift of vivid seeing with which these idyls dower the reader is as magical in this Greek poem as in the English and the Russian pieces. "Majestical Pan," the great earth-god, in his cool rock cleft, is the right deity to preside over all these lusty folk-pictures. He strikes upon the retina of the modern English eye, through Browning's picture of him in Pheidippides, with a reality that re-

constructs and reinterprets the crude kernel of eternal truth in the antique myth.

The metrical originality of "Pheidippides" is as notable as the force of conception shown in it. The measure is a mixture of dactyls and spondees, with a pause at the end of each line, reflecting the firm-set eager purpose of the patriotic Greek runner and the breath-obstructed rhythm of his swift bounding flight.

In the second series of the "Dramatic Idyls," published in the next year, there is a like vividness, passing gradually into greater complexity. "Echetlos" only has the yeomanlike muscle of the first series. If, looking to see what common bond unites this group, it be detected that all these pieces turn on Fame or common opinion of some sort, just as the earlier series circled about Death, it will be easy to see why so much less individualized a motive must involve greater social complexities in scene-setting and general drift.

In "Echetlos" the antithesis between the unfamed deeds of the "Holder of the Ploughshare" and the ignominious action of the great leaders, Miltiades and Themistocles, is obvious.

In "Clive" there is greater complexity; but it is still evident that a similar contrast is drawn between the universal acclaim of the dauntless man who gave England India and the secret cowardice within him that made him swerve from facing the gnawing, insidious difficulties of living out his life.

"Muléykeh," imbued with the picturesque life of the sons of Arabia, implies a contrast between mere ordinary pride in the possession of the famous Muléykeh, the Pearl of the Desert, who was never outstripped, and the unique love of her true owner,

Hóseyn, who forebore to cloud with any falsity the genuine pre-eminence of his matchless mare.

“Pietro of Abano” is the subtlest of all these idyls; and in its social satire of leadership according to Platonic thinkers and fame according to the unthinking world, it is intricate enough to afford food for long ruminations. But like all the other idyls it is ever graphic and never didactic, for all its ingenious implications. It contrasts the ill-fame and real ability of the mediæval magician, maligned by all the dull wits of his time, with the empty pretensions and solid deceit of the young Greek parasite. This trickster, who maps out a career of most successful seeming for himself, catching the applause of all the world, and usurping every reward of the despised Peter, out of whose brain his whole celebrity has shamelessly grown, is, at last, represented as waking from the toils his own wiles have spun by the help of Peter’s magical powder, to know the difference between the real and the specious in the service of mankind.

The two remaining idyls deal lightly — the first dryly and whimsically, the second poetically and gracefully — with two matters of equivocal repute bearing upon women. In the first, “Doctor —,” the time-honored abuse of wifehood crystallized in the Talmudic version of the old proverb, is illustrated in a humorous tale of the career of the devil’s son as a physician. The outcome of the whole, read between the lines of course, seems to be that this bad fame of woman, imputing her strength to her as a reproach, is susceptible of a reverse aspect, making it an advantage to her; for does it not give her a handle over the devil himself?

The purity of Luna’s love for Pan, despite the

impure look it wears in the gossiping old legend, is touched upon with the airiest of pencils. Like the vision of moon-lit, moon-lost cloud it summons up, it is a subject for fleeting discernment as to the inner meaning lurking in an old myth. That myth is as appropriately associated with this second series of idyls, penetrating the inner worth of equivocal opinions, as the Pan of "Pheidippides" is suited to the vivid robustness of the first series.

The poet's picturesque story-telling ability had free and vigorous play in these idyls; freer, perhaps, since without admixture of involved dialogue *pro* and *con*, probing and testing appearance, than in any other continuous portion of his work.

In "Jocoseria" much of the same sort of alert easy-going workmanship appears. It seems done almost offhand, like the dexterous thrusts of a wise but playful giant whose art appears careless because it is so familiar a practice. The keen satire, the humor that stings human foibles, and the kindness that thoroughly understands what it desires to better, and takes no shallow view of human virtue, are the characteristics of this period closing with "Jocoseria." During all of it a new access of pictorialness seems to have invigorated and freshly anointed Browning's dramatic powers. "Solomon and Balkis," and "Adam, Lilith, and Eve," reveal this easy forcibleness in a sportive light. His mockery in "Jocoseria," however, always has meaning. When it grows weighty with its burden of inward significance, it has as serious an ending as "Jochanan Hakkadosh." When it grows hot with indignation over a light judgment or a treacherous act, it ends with as palpable a cut as in "Donald," at the claim of the sportsman to valor, or with as

fierce a retribution as Christina is dramatically made to award her favored Monaldeschi in the historic gallery at Fontainebleau.

The lyrical beauty of "Never the Time and the Place," or the depth and splendor and power of "Ixion," or the spiritual insight of "Jochanan Hak-kadosh" are all qualities as noticeably belonging to Browning's earlier work as to the ripe fruitage of this period. In "Jochanan," especially, the philosophically religious Browning of "The Death in the Desert" is revived, though under a different aspect. With Semitic sensuousness now, instead of the idealism more peculiarly Christian, he reveals the happy unity of life, when all phases of experience are regarded, as by his St. John in the Desert all phases of belief were regarded, as a continuously enlightening process.

At the close of "Jocoseria," in the epilogue poem called "Pambo," Browning leaves the stage with a laugh. Playing with his critics good-humoredly enough, he yet gives them, in jest, the home-hit that he has found their early criticism worth as much to him as the professor's exposition of his text was to Pambo. He can reform his expression only by expressing himself, and when he does so, he discovers that his faults and excellences are alike the outcome of his quality.

Whatever fresh flare of the poetic flame may be hailed in this pictorial period of Browning's development, or whatever proficiency and ease of touch distinguish it, they must be recognized, in the light of his life-long devotion to his chosen art, as but the legitimate outgrowth of his original gift.

CHARLOTTE PORTER.
HELEN A. CLARKE.

THE
AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

1877

MAY I be permitted to chat a little, by way of recreation, at the end of a somewhat toilsome and perhaps fruitless adventure?

If, because of the immense fame of the following Tragedy, I wished to acquaint myself with it, and could only do so by the help of a translator, I should require him to be literal at every cost save that of absolute violence to our language. The use of certain allowable constructions which, happening to be out of daily favor, are all the more appropriate to archaic workmanship, is no violence: but I would be tolerant for once, — in the case of so immensely famous an original, — of even a clumsy attempt to furnish me with the very turn of each phrase in as Greek a fashion as English will bear: while, with respect to amplifications and embellishments, — anything rather than, with the good farmer, experience that most signal of mortifications, “to gape for Æschylus and get Theognis.” I should especially decline, — what may appear to brighten up a passage, — the employment of a new word for some old one — *πόνος*, or *μέγας*, or *τέλος*, with its congeners, recurring four times in three lines: for though such substitution may be in itself perfectly justifiable, yet this exercise of ingenuity ought to be within the competence of the unaided English reader if he likes to show himself ingenious. Learning Greek teaches Greek, and nothing else: certainly not common sense, if that have failed to precede the teaching. Further, — if I obtained a mere strict bald version of thing by thing, or at least

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word pregnant with thing, I should hardly look for an impossible transmission of the reputed magniloquence and sonority of the Greek; and this with the less regret, inasmuch as there is abundant musicality elsewhere, but nowhere else than in his poem the ideas of the poet. And lastly, when presented with these ideas, I should expect the result to prove very hard reading indeed if it were meant to resemble Æschylus, *ξυμβαλεῖν οὐ ῥάδιος*, "not easy to understand," in the opinion of his stoutest advocate among the ancients; while, I suppose, even modern scholarship sympathizes with that early declaration of the redoubtable Salmasius, when, looking about for an example of the truly obscure for the benefit of those who found obscurity in the sacred books, he protested that this particular play leaves them all behind in this respect, with their "Hebraisms, Syriasms, Hellenisms, and the whole of such bag and baggage."¹ For, over and above the purposed ambiguity of the Chorus, the text is sadly corrupt, probably interpolated, and certainly mutilated; and no unlearned person enjoys the scholar's privilege of trying his fancy upon each obstacle whenever he comes to a stoppage, and effectually clearing the way by suppressing what seems to lie in it.

All I can say for the present performance is, that I have done as I would be done by, if need were. Should anybody, without need, honor my translation by a comparison with the original, I beg him to observe that, following no editor exclusively, I keep to the earlier readings so long as sense can be made out of them, but disregard, I hope, little of importance in recent criticism so far as I have fallen in with it. Fortunately, the poorest translation, provided only it be faithful, — though it reproduce all the artistic confusion of tenses,

¹ "Quis Æschylum possit affirmare Græce nunc scienti magis patere explicabilem quam Evangelia aut Epistolas Apostolicas? Unus ejus Agamemnon obscuritate superat quantum est librorum sacrorum cum suis Hebraismis et Syriasmis et tota Hellenisticæ suppellectili vel farragine."
— SALMASIUS *de Hellenistica*, Epist. Dedic.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 3

moods, and persons, with which the original teems, — will not only suffice to display what an eloquent friend maintains to be the all-in-all of poetry — “the action of the piece” — but may help to illustrate his assurance that “the Greeks are the highest models of expression, the unapproached masters of the grand style: their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably kept in its right degree of prominence, because it is so simple and so well subordinated, because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys . . . not a word wasted, not a sentiment capriciously thrown in, stroke on stroke!”¹ So may all happen!

Just a word more on the subject of my spelling — in a transcript from the Greek and there exclusively — Greek names and places precisely as does the Greek author. I began this practice, with great innocence of intention, some six-and-thirty years ago. Leigh Hunt, I remember, was accustomed to speak of his gratitude, when ignorant of Greek, to those writers (like Goldsmith) who had obliged him by using English characters, so that he might relish, for instance, the smooth quality of such a phrase as “hapalunetai galené;” he said also that Shelley was indignant at “Firenze” having displaced the Dantesque “Fiorenza,” and would contemptuously English the intruder “Firence.” I supposed I was doing a simple thing enough: but there has been till lately much astonishment at *os* and *us*, *ai* and *oi*, representing the same letters in Greek. Of a sudden, however, whether in translation or out of it, everybody seems committing the offence, although the adoption of *u* for *υ* still presents such difficulty that it is a wonder how we have hitherto escaped “Eyripides.” But there existed a sturdy Briton who, Ben Jonson informs us, wrote “The Life of the Emperor Anthony Pie” — whom we now acquiesce in as Antoninus Pius: for “with time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes

¹ ‘Poems’ by Mathew Arnold, Preface.

4 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

satin." Yet there is, on all sides, much profession of respect for what Keats called "vowelled Greek" — "consonanted," one would expect; and, in a criticism upon a late admirable translation of something of my own, it was deplored that, in a certain verse corresponding in measure to the fourteenth of the sixth Pythian Ode, "neither Professor Jebb in his Greek, nor Mr. Browning in his English, could emulate that matchlessly musical γόνον ἰδῶν κάλλιστον ἀνδρῶν." Now, undoubtedly, "Seeing her son the fairest of men" has more sense than sound to boast of: but then, would not an Italian roll us out "Rimirando il figliuolo bellissimo degli uomini!" whereat Pindar, no less than Professor Jebb and Mr. Browning, τριακτῆρος οἴχεται τυχῶν.

It is recorded in the annals of Art that there was once upon a time, practising so far north as Stockholm, a painter and picture-cleaner — sire of a less unhappy son — Old Muytens: and the annalist, Baron de Tessé, has not concealed his profound dissatisfaction at Old Muytens' conceit "to have himself had something to do with the work of whatever master of eminence might pass through his hands." Whence it was, — the Baron goes on to deplore, — that much detriment was done to that excellent piece "The Recognition of Achilles," by Rubens, through the perversity of Old Muytens, "who must needs take on him to beautify every nymph of the twenty by the bestowment of a widened eye and an enlarged mouth." I, at least, have left eyes and mouths everywhere as I found them, and this conservatism is all that claims praise for — what is, after all, ἀκέλευστος ἄμισθος ἀοιδά. No, neither "uncommanded" nor "unrewarded:" since it was commanded of me by my venerated friend Thomas Carlyle, and rewarded will it indeed become if I am permitted to dignify it by the prefatory insertion of his dear and noble name.

R. B.

LONDON: October 1st, 1877.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 5

PERSONS

Warder.
Choros of Old Men.
KLUTAIMNESTRA.
TALTHUBIOS, *Herald.*
AGAMEMNON
KASSANDRA.
AIGISTHOS.

WARDER

THE gods I ask deliverance from these labors,
Watch of a year's length whereby, slumbering
through it

On the Atreidai's roofs on elbows, — dog-like —
I know of nightly star-groups the assemblage,
And those that bring to men winter and summer
Bright dynasts, as they pride them in the æther
— Stars, when they wither, and the uprisings of them.

And now on ward I wait the torch's token,
The glow of fire, shall bring from Troia message
And word of capture: so prevails audacious 10
The man's-way-planning hoping heart of woman.
But when I, driven from night-rest, dew-drenched
hold to

This couch of mine — not looked upon by visions,
Since fear instead of sleep still stands beside me,
So as that fast I fix in sleep no eyelids —
And when to sing or chirp a tune I fancy,
For slumber such song-remedy infusing,
I wail then, for this House's fortune groaning,
Not, as of old, after the best ways governed.
Now, lucky be deliverance from these labors, 20
At good news — the appearing dusky fire!
O hail, thou lamp of night, a day-long lightness
Revealing, and of dances the ordainment!

6 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Halloo, halloo!
To Agamemnon's wife I show, by shouting,
That, from bed starting up at once, i' the household
Joyous acclaim, good-omened to this torch-blaze,
She send aloft, if haply Ilium's city
Be taken, as the beacon boasts announcing.
Ay, and, for me, myself will dance a prelude, 30
For, that my masters' dice drop right, I'll reckon:
Since thrice-six has it thrown to me, this signal.
Well, may it hap that, as he comes, the loved hand
O' the household's lord I may sustain with this hand!
As for the rest, I'm mute: on tongue a big ox
Has trodden. Yet this House, if voice it take should,
Most plain would speak. So, willing I myself speak
To those who know: to who know not — I'm
blankness.

CHOROS

The tenth year this, since Priamos' great match,
King Menelaos, Agamemnon King, 40
— The strenuous yoke-pair of the Atreidai's honor
Two-throned, two-sceptred, whereof Zeus was
donor —
Did from this land the aid, the armament despatch,
The thousand-sailored force of Argives clamoring
"Ares" from out the indignant breast, as fling
Passion forth vultures which, because of grief
Away, — as are their young ones, — with the thief,
Lofty above their brood-nests wheel in ring,
Row round and round with oar of either wing, 40
Lament the bedded chicks, lost labor that was love:
Which hearing, one above
— Whether Apollon, Pan or Zeus — that wail,
Sharp-piercing bird-shriek of the guests who fare
Housemates with gods in air —

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 7

Suchanone sends, against who these assail,
What, late-sent, shall not fail
Of punishing — Erinus. Here as there,
The Guardian of the Guest, Zeus, the excelling one,
Sends against Alexandros either son
Of Atreus: for that wife, the many-husbanded, 60
Appointing many a tug that tries the limb,
While the knee plays the prop in dust, while, shred
To morsels, lies the spear-shaft; in those grim
Marriage-prolusions when their Fury wed
Danaoi and Troes, both alike. All's said:
Things are where things are, and, as fate has willed,
So shall they be fulfilled.

Not gently-grieving, not just doling out
The drops of expiation — no, nor tears distilled —
Shall he we know of bring the hard about 70
To soft — that intense ire
At those mock rites unsanctified by fire.
But we pay naught here: through our flesh, age-
weighed,

Left out from who gave aid
In that day, — we remain,
Staying on staves a strength
The equal of a child's at length.
For when young marrow in the breast doth reign,
That's the old man's match, — Ares out of place
In either: but in oldest age's case, 80
Foliage a-fading, why, he wends his way
On three feet, and, no stronger than a child,
Wanders about gone wild,
A dream in day.

But thou, Tundareus' daughter, Klutaimnestra
queen,
What need? What new? What having heard or seen,

8 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

By what announcement's tidings, everywhere
Settest thou, round about, the sacrifice a-flare?
For, of all gods the city-swaying,
Those supernal, those infernal, 90
Those of the fields', those of the mart's obeying, —
The altars blaze with gifts;
And here and there, heaven-high the torch uplifts
Flame — medicated with persuasions mild,
With foul admixture unbeguiled —
Of holy unguent, from the clotted chrism
Brought from the palace, safe in its abysm.
Of these things, speaking what may be indeed
Both possible and lawful to concede,
Healer do thou become! — of this solicitude 100
Which, now, stands plainly forth of evil mood,
And, then . . . but from oblations, hope, to-day
Gracious appearing, wards away
From soul the insatiate care,
The sorrow at my breast, devouring there!
Empowered am I to sing
The omens, what their force which, journeying,
Rejoiced the potentates:
(For still, from God, inflates
My breast song-suasion: age, 110
Born to the business, still such war can wage)
— How the fierce bird against the Teukris land
Despatched, with spear and executing hand,
The Achaian's two-throned empery — o'er Hellas'
youth
Two rulers with one mind:
The birds' king to these kings of ships, on high,
— The black sort, and the sort that's white behind, —
Appearing by the palace, on the spear-throw side,
In right sky-regions, visible far and wide, —
Devouring a hare-creature, great with young, 120

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 9

Balked of more racings they, as she from whom
they sprung!
Ah, Linos, say — ah, Linos, song of wail!
But may the good prevail!

The prudent army-prophet seeing two
The Atreidai, two their tempers, knew
Those feasting on the hare
The armanent-conductors were;
And thus he spoke, explaining signs in view
“In time, this outset takes the town of Priamos:
But all before its towers, — the people’s wealth that
was, 130
Of flocks and herds, — as sure, shall booty-sharing
thence
Drain to the dregs away, by battle violence.
Only, have care lest grudge of any god disturb
With cloud the unsullied shine of that great force,
the curb
Of Troia, struck with damp
Beforehand in the camp!
For envyingly is
The virgin Artemis
Toward — her father’s flying hounds — this House —
The sacrificers of the piteous 140
And cowering beast,
Brood and all, ere the birth: she hates the eagles’ feast.
Ah, Linos, say — ah, Linos, song of wail!
But may the good prevail!

“Thus ready is the beauteous one with help
To those small dewdrop-things fierce lions whelp,
And udder-loving litter of each brute
That roams the mead; and therefore makes she suit,
The fair one, for fulfilment to the end

10 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Of things these signs portend — 150
Which partly smile, indeed, but partly scowl —
The phantasms of the fowl.
I call Iefos Paian to avert
She work the Danaoi hurt
By any thwarting waftures, long and fast
Holdings from sail of ships:
And sacrifice, another than the last,
She for herself precipitate —
Something unlawful, feast for no man's lips,
Builder of quarrels, with the House cognate — 160
Having in awe no husband: for remains
A frightful, backward-darting in the path,
Wily house-keeping chronicler of wrath,
That has to punish that old children's fate!"
Such things did Kalchas, — with abundant gains
As well, — vociferate,
Predictions from the birds, in journeying,
Above the abode of either king.
With these, symphonious, sing —
Ah, Linos, say — ah, Linos, song of wail! 170
But may the good prevail!

Zeus, whosoe'er he be, — if that express
Aught dear to him on whom I call —
So do I him address.
I cannot liken out, by all
Admeasurement of powers,
Any but Zeus for refuge at such hours,
If veritably needs I must
From off my soul its vague care-burthen thrust.

Not — whosoever was the great of yore, 180
Bursting to bloom with bravery all round —
Is in our mouths: he was, but is no more.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 11

And who it was that after came to be,
Met the thrice-throwing wrestler, — he
Is also gone to ground.
But “Zeus” — if any, heart and soul, that name —
Shouting the triumph-praise — proclaim,
Complete in judgment shall that man be found.
Zeus, who leads onward mortals to be wise,
Appoints that suffering masterfully teach. 190
In sleep, before the heart of each,
A woe-remembering travail sheds in dew
Discretion, — ay, and melts the unwilling too
By what, perchance, may be a graciousness
Of gods, enforced no less, —
As they, commanders of the crew,
Assume the awful seat.

And then the old leader of the Achaian fleet,
Disparaging no seer — 190
With bated breath to suit misfortune’s inrush here
— (What time it labored, that Achaian host,
By stay from sailing, — every pulse at length
Emptied of vital strength, —
Hard over Kalchis shore-bound, current-croft
In Aulis station, — while the winds which post
From Strumon, ill-delayers, famine-fraught,
Tempters of man to sail where harborage is naught,
Spendthrifts of ships and cables, turning time
To twice the length, — these carded, by delay,
To less and less away 210
The Argeians’ flowery prime:
And when a remedy more grave and grand
Than aught before, — yea, for the storm and dearth, —
The prophet to the foremost in command
Shrieked forth, as cause of this
Adducing Artemis,

12 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

So that the Atreidai striking staves on earth
Could not withhold the tear) —
Then did the king, the elder, speak this clear.

“Heavy the fate, indeed, — to disobey! 230
Yet heavy if my child I slay,
The adornment of my household: with the tide
Of virgin-slaughter, at the altar-side,
A father’s hands defiling: which the way
Without its evils, say?
How shall I turn fleet-fugitive,
Failing of duty to allies?
Since for a wind-abating sacrifice
And virgin blood, — ’t is right they strive,
Nay, madden with desire. 230
Well may it work them — this that they require!”

But when he underwent necessity’s
Yoke-trace, — from soul blowing unhallowed change
Unclean, abominable, — thence — another man —
The audacious mind of him began
Its wildest range.
For this it is gives mortals hardihood —
Some vice-devising miserable mood
Of madness, and first woe of all the brood.
The sacrificer of his daughter — strange! — 240
He dared become, to expedite
Woman-avenging warfare, — anchors weighed
With such prelusive rite!

Prayings and callings “Father” — naught they made
Of these, and of the virgin-age, —
Captains heart-set on war to wage!
His ministrants, vows done, the father bade —
Kid-like, above the altar, swathed in pall,

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 13

Take her — lift high, and have no fear at all,
 Head-downward, and the fair mouth's guard 250
 And frontage hold, — press hard
 From utterance a curse against the House
 By dint of bit — violence bridling speech.
 And as to ground her saffron-vest she shed,
 She smote the sacrificers all and each
 With arrow sweet and piteous,
 From the eye only sped, —
 Significant of will to use a word,
 Just as in pictures: since, full many a time,
 In her sire's guest-hall, by the well-heaped board 260
 Had she made music, — lovingly with chime
 Of her chaste voice, that unpolluted thing,
 Honored the third libation, — paian that should
 bring
 Good fortune to the sire she loved so well.

What followed — those things I nor saw nor tell.
 But Kalchas' arts, — whate'er they indicate, —
 Miss of fulfilment never: it is fate.
 True, justice makes, in sufferers, a desire
 To know the future woe preponderate.
 But — hear before is need? 270
 To that, farewell and welcome! 't is the same, indeed,
 As grief beforehand: clearly, part for part,
 Conformably to Kalchas' art,
 Shall come the event.
 And be they as they may, things subsequent, —
 What is to do, prosperity betide
 E'en as we wish it! — we, the next allied,
 Sole guarding barrier of the Apian land.

I am come, reverencing power in thee,
 O Klutaimnestra! For 't is just we bow 280

14 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

To the ruler's wife, — the male-seat man-bereaved.
But if thou, having heard good news, — or none, —
For good news' hope dost sacrifice thus wide,
I would hear gladly: art thou mute, — no grudge!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Good-news-announcer, may — as is the byword —
Morn become, truly, — news from Night his mother!
But thou shalt learn joy past all hope of hearing.
Priamos' city have the Argeioi taken.

CHOROS

How sayest? The word, from want of faith, escaped
me.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Troia the Achaioi hold: do I speak plainly? 290

CHOROS

Joy overcreeps me, calling forth the tear-drop.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Right! for, that glad thou art, thine eye convicts thee.

CHOROS

For — what to thee, of all this, trusty token?

KLUTAIMNESTRA

What 's here! how else? unless the god have cheated.

CHOROS

Haply thou flattering shows of dreams respectest?

KLUTAIMNESTRA

No fancy would I take of soul sleep-burthened.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 15

CHOROS

But has there puffed thee up some unwinged omen?

KLUTAIMNESTRA

As a young maid's my mind thou mockest grossly.

CHOROS

Well, at what time was — even sacked, the city? 290

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Of this same mother Night — the dawn, I tell thee.

CHOROS

And who of messengers could reach this swiftness?

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Hephaistos — sending a bright blaze from Ide.
Beacon did beacon send, from fire the poster,
Hitherward: Ide to the rock Hermaian
Of Lemnos: and a third great torch o' the island
Zeus' seat received in turn, the Athoan summit.
And, — so upsoaring as to stride sea over,
The strong lamp-voyager, and for all joyance —
Did the gold-glorious splendor, any sun like,
Pass on — the pine-tree — to Makistos' watch-
place; 310
Who did not, — tardy, — caught, no wits about
him,
By sleep, — decline his portion of the missive.
And far the beacon's light, on stream Euripos
Arriving, made aware Messapios' warders,
And up they lit in turn, played herald onwards,
Kindling with flame a heap of gray old heather.

16 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

And, strengthening still, the lamp, decaying nowise,
Springing o'er Plain Asopos, — full-moon-fashion
Effulgent, — toward the crag of Mount Kithairon,
Roused a new rendering-up of fire the escort — 320
And light, far escort, lacked no recognition
O' the guard — as burning more than burnings told
you.

And over Lake Gorgopis light went leaping,
And, at Mount Aigioplanktos safe arriving,
Enforced the law — “to never stint the fire-stuff.”
And they send, lighting up with ungrudged vigor,
Of flame a huge beard, ay, the very foreland
So as to strike above, in burning onward,
The look-out which commands the Strait Saronic.
Then did it dart until it reached the outpost 330
Mount Arachnaios here, the city's neighbors;
And then darts to this roof of the Atreidai
This light of Ide's fire not unforefathered!
Such are the rules prescribed the flambeau-bearers:
He beats that 's first and also last in running.
Such is the proof and token I declare thee,
My husband having sent me news from Troia.

CHOROS

The gods, indeed, anon will I pray, woman!
But now, these words to hear, and sate my wonder
Thoroughly, I am fain — if twice thou tell them. 340

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Troia do the Achaioi hold, this same day.
I think a noise — no mixture — reigns i' the city.
Sour wine and unguent pour thou in one vessel —
Standers-apart, not lovers, wouldst thou style them:
And so, of captives and of conquerors, part-wise

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 17

The voices are to hear, of fortune diverse.
For those, indeed, upon the bodies prostrate
Of husbands, brothers, children upon parents
— The old men, from a throat that 's free no longer,
Shriekingly wail the death-doom of their dearest:
While these — the after-battle hungry labor, 351
Which prompts night-faring, marshals them to
breakfast

On the town's store, according to no billet
Of sharing, but as each drew lot of fortune.
In the spear-captured Troic habitations
House they already: from the frosts upæthral
And dews delivered, will they, luckless creatures,
Without a watch to keep, slumber all night through.
And if they fear the gods, the city-guarders, 359
And the gods' structures of the conquered country,
They may not — capturers — soon in turn be cap-
tive.

But see no prior lust befall the army
To sack things sacred — by gain-cravings van-
quished!
For there needs homeward the return's salvation,
To round the new limb back o' the double race-
course.

And guilty to the gods if came the army,
Awakened up the sorrow of those slaughtered
Might be — should no outbursting evils happen.
But may good beat — no turn to see i' the balance!
For, many benefits I want the gain of. 370

CHOROS

Woman, like prudent man thou kindly speakest.
And I, thus having heard thy trusty tokens,
The gods to rightly hail forthwith prepare me;
For, grace that must be paid has crowned our labors.

18 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

O Zeus the king, and friendly Night
Of these brave boons bestower —
Thou who didst fling on Troia's every tower
The o'er-roofing snare, that neither great thing might,
Nor any of the young ones, overpass
Captivity's great sweep-net — one and all 380
Of Ate held in thrall!

Ay, Zeus I fear — the guest's friend great — who was
The doer of this, and long since bent
The bow on Alexandros with intent
That neither wide o' the white
Nor o'er the stars the foolish dart should light.
The stroke of Zeus — they have it, as men say!
This, at least, from the source track forth we may!
As he ordained, so has he done.

"No" — said some one — 390
"The gods think fit to care
Nowise for mortals, such
As those by whom the good and fair
Of things denied their touch
Is trampled!" but he was profane.
That they do care, has been made plain
To offspring of the over-bold,
Outbreathing "Ares" greater than is just —
Houses that spill with more than they can hold,
More than is best for man. Be man's what must 400
Keep harm off, so that in himself he find
Sufficiency — the well-endowed of mind!
For there's no bulwark in man's wealth to him
Who, through a surfeit, kicks — into the dim
And disappearing — Right's great altar.

Yes —

It urges him, the sad persuasiveness,
Ate's insufferable child that schemes

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 19

Treason beforehand: and all cure is vain
It is not hidden: out it glares again,
A light dread-lamping-mischief, just as gleams 410
The badness of the bronze;
Through rubbing, puttings to the touch,
Black-clotted is he, judged at once.
He seeks — the boy — a flying bird to clutch,
The insufferable brand
Setting upon the city of his land
Whereof not any god hears prayer;
While he who brought about such evils there,
That unjust man, the god in grapple throws.
Such an one, Paris goes 420
Within the Atreidai's house —
Shamed the guest's board by robbery of the spouse.

And, leaving to her townsmen throngs a-spread
With shields, and spear-thrusts of sea-armament,
And bringing Ilion, in a dowry's stead,
Destruction — swiftly through the gates she went,
Daring the undareable. But many a groan outbroke
From prophets of the House as thus they spoke.
“Woe, woe the House, the House and Rulers, — woe
The marriage-bed and dints 430
A husband's love imprints!
There she stands silent! meets no honor — no
Shame — sweetest still to see of things gone long ago!
And, through desire of one across the main,
A ghost will seem within the house to reign:
And hateful to the husband is the grace
Of well-shaped statues: from — in place of eyes
Those blanks — all Aphrodite dies.

“But dream-appearing mournful fantasies —
There they stand, bringing grace that's vain. 440

20 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

For vain 't is, when brave things one seems to view;
The fantasy has floated off, hands through;
Gone, that appearance, — nowise left to creep, —
On wings, the servants in the paths of sleep!"
Woes, then, in household and on hearth, are such
As these — and woes surpassing these by much.

But not these only: everywhere —

For those who from the land

Of Hellas issued in a band,

Sorrow, the heart must bear,

450

Sits in the home of each, conspicuous there.

Many a circumstance, at least,

Touches the very breast.

For those

Whom any sent away, — he knows:

And in the live man's stead,

Armor and ashes reach

The house of each.

For Ares, gold-exchanger for the dead,

And balance-holder in the fight o' the spear,

460

Due-weight from Ilion sends —

What moves the tear on tear —

A charred scrap to the friends:

Filling with well-packed ashes every urn,

For man — that was — the sole return.

And they groan — praising much, the while,

Now this man as experienced in the strife,

Now that, fallen nobly on a slaughtered pile,

Because of — not his own — another's wife.

But things there be, one barks,

470

When no man harks:

A surreptitious grief that 's grudge

Against the Atreidai who first sought the judge.

But some there, round the rampart, have

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 21

In Ilian earth, each one his grave:
All fair-formed as at birth,
It hid them — what they have and hold — the
hostile earth.

And big with anger goes the city's word,
And pays a debt by public curse incurred.
And ever with me — as about to hear 480
A something night-involved — remains my fear:
Since of the many-slayers — not
Unwatching are the gods.
The black Erinues, at due periods —
Whoever gains the lot
Of fortune with no right —
Him, by life's strain and stress
Back-again-beaten from success,
They strike blind: and among the out-of-sight
For who has got to be, avails no might. 490
The being praised outrageously
Is grave, for at the eyes of such an one
Is launched, from Zeus, the thunder-stone.
Therefore do I decide
For so much and no more prosperity
Than of his envy passes unespied.
Neither a city-sacker would I be,
Nor life, myself by others captive, see.

A swift report has gone our city through, 500
From fire, the good-news messenger: if true,
Who knows? Or is it not a god-sent lie?
Who is so childish and deprived of sense
That, having, at announcements of the flame
Thus novel, felt his own heart fired thereby,
He then shall at a change of evidence,
Be worsted just the same?

22 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

It is conspicuous in a woman's nature,
Before its view to take a grace for granted:
Too trustful, — on her boundary, usurpature
Is swiftly made; 510
But swiftly, too, decayed,
The glory perishes by woman vaunted.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Soon shall we know — of these light-bearing torches,
And beacons and exchanges, fire with fire —
If they are true, indeed, or if, dream-fashion,
This gladstone light came and deceived our judgment.

Yon herald from the shore I see, o'ershadowed
With boughs of olive: dust, mud's thirsty brother,
Close neighbors on his garb, thus testify me
That neither voiceless, nor yet kindling for thee 520
Mountain-wood-flame, shall he explain by fire-
smoke:

But either tell out more the joyance, speaking. . . .
Word contrary to which, I aught but love it!
For may good be — to good that's known — ap-
pendage!

CHOROS

Whoever prays for aught else to this city
— May he himself reap fruit of his mind's error!

HERALD

Ha, my forefathers' soil of earth Argeian!
Thee, in this year's tenth light, am I returned to —
Of many broken hopes, on one hope chancing;
For never prayed I, in this earth Argeian 530
Dying, to share my part in tomb the dearest.
Now, hail thou earth, and hail thou also, sunlight,

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 23

And Zeus, the country's lord, and king the Puthian
From bow no longer urging at us arrows!
Enough, beside Skamandros, cam'st thou adverse:
Now, contrary, be saviour thou and healer,
O king Apollon! And gods conquest-granting,
All — I invoke too, and my tutelary
Hermes, dear herald, heralds' veneration, — 539
And Heroes our forthsenders, — friendly, once more
The army to receive, the war-spear's leavings!
Ha, mansions of my monarchs, roofs beloved,
And awful seats, and deities sun-fronting —
Receive with pomp your monarch, long time absent!
For he comes bringing light in night-time to you,
In common with all these — king Agamemnon.
But kindly greet him — for clear shows your duty —
Who has dug under Troia with the mattock
Of Zeus the Avenger, whereby plains are out-
ploughed,
Altars unrecognizable, and gods' shrines, 550
And the whole land's seed thoroughly has perished.
And such a yoke-strap having cast round Troia,
The elder king Atreides, happy man — he
Comes to be honored, worthiest of what mortals
Now are. Nor Paris nor the accomplice-city
Outvaunts their deed as more than they are done-by:
For, in a suit for rape and theft found guilty,
He missed of plunder and, in one destruction,
Fatherland, house and home has mowed to atoms:
Debts the Priamidai have paid twice over. 560

CHOROS

Hail, herald from the army of Achaians!

HERALD

I hail: — to die, will gainsay gods no longer!

24 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

CHOROS

Love of this fatherland did exercise thee?

HERALD

So that I weep, at least, with joy, my eyes full.

CHOROS

What, of this gracious sickness were ye gainers?

HERALD

How now? instructed, I this speech shall master.

CHOROS

For those who loved you back, with longing stricken.

HERALD

This land yearned for the yearning army, say'st
thou?

CHOROS

So as to set me oft, from dark mind, groaning. 500

HERALD

Whence came this ill mind — hatred to the army?

CHOROS

Of old, I use, for mischief's physic, silence.

HERALD

And how, the chiefs away, did you fear any?

CHOROS

So that now, — late thy word, — much joy were —
dying!

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 25

HERALD

For well have things been worked out: these, — in
much time,

Some of them, one might say, had luck in falling,
While some were faulty: since who, gods excepted,
Goes through the whole time of his life, ungrieving?
For labors should I tell of, and bad lodgments,
Narrow deckways ill-strewn, too, — what the day's
woe

We did not groan at getting for our portion? 580
As for land-things, again, on went more hatred!
Since beds were ours hard by the foemen's ramparts,
And, out of heaven and from the earth, the meadow
Dews kept a-sprinkle, an abiding damage
Of vestures, making hair a wild-beast matting.
Winter, too, if one told of it — bird-slaying —
Such as, unbearable, Idaian snow brought —
Or heat, when waveless, on its noontide couches
Without a wind, the sea would slumber falling
— Why must one mourn these? O'er and gone is
labor: 590

O'er and gone is it, even to those dead ones,
So that no more again they mind uprising.
Why must we tell in numbers those deprived ones,
And the live man be vexed with fate's fresh out-
break?

Rather, I bid full farewell to misfortunes!
For us, the left from out the Argeian army,
The gain beats, nor does sorrow counterbalance.
So that 't is fitly boasted of, this sunlight,
By us, o'er sea and land the aery flyers,
"Troia at last taking, the band of Argives 600
Hang up such trophies to the gods of Hellas
Within their domes — new glory to grow ancient!"

26 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Such things men having heard must praise the city
And army-leaders: and the grace which wrought
them —
Of Zeus, shall honored be. Thou hast my whole
word.

CHOROS

O'ercome by words, their sense I do not gainsay.
For, aye this breeds youth in the old — "to learn
well."
But these things most the house and Klutaimnestra
Concern, 't is likely: while they make me rich, too.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

I shouted long ago, indeed, for joyance, 610
When came that first night-messenger of fire
Proclaiming Ilion's capture and dispersion.
And some one, girding me, said "Through fire-
bearers
Persuaded — Troia to be sacked now, thinkest?
Truly, the woman's way, — high to lift heart up!"
By such words I was made seem wit-bewildered:
Yet still I sacrificed; and, — female-song with, —
A shout one man and other, through the city,
Set up, congratulating in the gods' seats,
Soothing the incense-eating flame right fragrant. 620
And now, what's more, indeed, why need'st thou
tell me?

I of the king himself shall learn the whole word:
And, — as may best be, — I my revered husband
Shall hasten, as he comes back, to receive: for —
What's to a wife sweeter to see than this light
(Her husband, by the god saved, back from warfare)
So as to open gates? This tell my husband —
To come at soonest to his loving city.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 27

A faithful wife at home may he find, coming! 620
Such an one as he left — the dog o' the household —
Trusty to him, adverse to the ill-minded,
And, in all else, the same: no signet-impress
Having done harm to, in that time's duration.
I know nor pleasure, nor blameworthy converse
With any other man more than — bronze-dippings!

HERALD

Such boast as this — brimful of the veracious —
Is, for a high-born dame, not bad to send forth!

CHOROS

Ay, she spoke thus to thee — that hast a knowledge
From clear interpreters — a speech most seemly.
But speak thou, herald! Meneleos I ask of: 640
If he, returning, back in safety also
Will come with you — this land's beloved chieftain?

HERALD

There 's no way I might say things false and pleasant
For friends to reap the fruits of through a long time.

CHOROS

How then if, speaking good, things true thou chance
on?

HERALD

For not well-hidden things become they, sundered.
The man has vanished from the Achaic army,
He and his ship too. I announce no falsehood.

CHOROS

Whether forth-putting openly from Ilion,
Or did storm — wide woe — snatch him from the
army? 660

28 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

HERALD

Like topping bowman, thou hast touched the target,
And a long sorrow hast succinctly spoken.

CHOROS

Whether, then, of him, as a live or dead man
Was the report by other sailors bruited?

HERALD

Nobody knows so as to tell out clearly
Excepting Helios who sustains earth's nature.

CHOROS

How say'st thou then, did storm the naval army
Attack and end, by the celestials' anger?

HERALD

It suits not to defile a day auspicious
With ill-announcing speech: distinct each god's
due: 660

And when a messenger with gloomy visage
To a city bears a fall'n host's woes — God ward
off! —

One popular wound that happens to the city,
And many sacrificed from many households —
Men, scourged by that two-thonged whip Ares
loves so,

Double spear-headed curse, bloody yoke-couple, —
Of woes like these, doubtless, whoe'er comes
weighted,

Him does it suit to sing the Erinues' paian.
But who, of matters saved a glad-news-bringer,

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 29

Comes to a city in good estate rejoicing. . . . 670
How shall I mix good things with evil, telling
Of storm against the Achaioi, urged by gods' wrath?
For they swore league, being arch-foes before that,
Fire and the sea: and plighted troth approved they,
Destroying the unhappy Argeian army.
At night began the bad-wave-outbreak evils;
For, ships against each other Threikian breezes
Shattered: and these, butted at in a fury
By storm and typhoon, with surge rain-resounding, —
Off they went, vanished, thro' a bad herd's whining.
And, when returned the brilliant light of Helios, 681
We view the Aigaian sea on flower with corpses
Of men Achaian and with naval ravage.
But us indeed, and ship, unhurt i' the hull too,
Either some one outstole us or outprayed us —
Some god — no man it was the tiller touching.
And Fortune, saviour, willing on our ship sat.
So as it neither had in harbor wave-surge
Nor ran aground against a shore all rocky.
And then, the water-Haides having fled from 690
In the white day, not trusting to our fortune,
We chewed the cud in thoughts — this novel sorrow
O' the army laboring and badly pounded.
And now — if any one of them is breathing —
They talk of us as having perished: why not?
And we — that they the same fate have, imagine.
May it be for the best! Meneleos, then,
Foremost and specially to come, expect thou!
If (that is) any ray o' the sun reports him
Living and seeing to — by Zeus' contrivings, 700
Not yet disposed to quite destroy the lineage —
Some hope is he shall come again to household.
Having heard such things, know, thou truth art
hearing!

30 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

CHOROS

Who may he have been that named thus wholly
with exactitude —

(Was he some one whom we see not, by forecastings
of the future

Guiding tongue in happy mood?)

— Her with battle for a bridegroom, on all sides
contention-wooded,

Helena? Since — mark the suture! —

Ship's-Hell, Man's-Hell, City's-Hell,

From the delicately-pompous curtains that pavilion
well, 710

Forth, by favor of the gale

Of earth-born Zephuros did she sail.

Many shield-bearers, leaders of the pack,

Sailed too upon their track,

Theirs who had directed oar,

Then visible no more,

To Simois' leaf-luxuriant shore —

For sake of strife all gore!

To Iliion Wrath, fulfilling her intent,

This marriage-care — the rightly named so —
sent: 720

In after-time, for the tables' abuse

And that of the hearth-partaker Zeus,

Bringing to punishment

Those who honored with noisy throat

The honor of the bride, the hymenæal note

Which did the kinsfolk then to singing urge.

But, learning a new hymn for that which was,

The ancient city of Priamos

Groans probably a great and general dirge,

Denominating Paris 730

“The man that miserably marries:” —

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 31

She who, all the while before,
A life, that was a general dirge
For citizens' unhappy slaughter, bore.

And thus a man, by no milk's help,
Within his household reared a lion's whelp
That loved the teat
In life's first festal stage:
Gentle as yet,
A true child-lover, and, to men of age, 740
A thing whereat pride warms;
And oft he had it in his arms
Like any new-born babe, bright-faced, to hand
Wagging its tail, at belly's strict command.

But in due time upgrown,
The custom of progenitors was shown:
For — thanks for sustenance repaying
With ravage of sheep slaughtered —
It made unbidden feast;
With blood the house was watered, 750
To household came a woe there was no staying:
Great mischief many-slaying!
From God it was — some priest
Of Ate, in the house, by nurture thus increased.

At first, then, to the city of Ilion went
A soul, as I might say, of windless calm —
Wealth's quiet ornament,
An eyes'-dart bearing balm,
Love's spirit-biting flower.
But — from the true course bending — 760
She brought about, of marriage, bitter ending:
Ill-resident, ill-mate, in power
Passing to the Priamidai — by sending

32 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Of Hospitable Zeus —
Erinus for a bride, — to make brides mourn, her
dower.

Spoken long ago
Was the ancient saying
Still among mortals saying:
“Man’s great prosperity at height of rise
Engenders offspring nor unchilded dies; 770
And, from good fortune, to such families,
Buds forth insatiate woe.”

Whereas, distinct from any,
Of my own mind I am:
For ’t is the unholy deed begets the many,
Resembling each its dam.
Of households that correctly estimate,
Ever a beauteous child is born of Fate.
But ancient Arrogance delights to generate 779
Arrogance, young and strong mid mortals’ sorrow,
Or now, or then, when comes the appointed mor-
row.

And she bears young Satiety;
And, fiend with whom nor fight nor war can be,
Unholy Daring — twin black Curses
Within the household, children like their nurses.

But Justice shines in smoke-grimed habitations,
And honors the well-omened life;
While, — gold-besprinkled stations
Where the hands’ filth is rife,
With backward-turning eyes 790
Leaving, — to holy seats she hies,
Not worshipping the power of wealth
Stamped with applause by stealth:
And to its end directs each thing begun.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 33

Approach then, my monarch, of Troia the sacker,
of Atreus the son!

How ought I address thee, how ought I revere thee,
— nor yet overhitting

Nor yet underbending the grace that is fitting?

Many of mortals hasten to honor the seeming-to-be—
Passing by justice: and, with the ill-faring, to groan
as he groans all are free. 799

But no bite of the sorrow their liver has reached to:
They say with the joyful, — one outside on each, too,
As they force to a smile smileless faces.

But whoever is good at distinguishing races
In sheep of his flock — it is not for the eyes
Of a man to escape such a shepherd's surprise,
As they seem, from a well-wishing mind,
In watery friendship to fawn and be kind.

Thou to me, then, indeed, sending an army for
Helena's sake,

(I will not conceal it) wast — oh, by no help of the
Muses! — depicted

Not well of thy midriff the rudder directing, —
convicted 810

Of bringing a boldness they did not desire to the
men with existence at stake.

But now — from no outside of mind, nor unlovingly
— gracious thou art

To those who have ended the labor, fulfilling their
part;

And in time shalt thou know, by inquiry instructed,
Who of citizens justly, and who not to purpose, the
city conducted.

AGAMEMNON

First, indeed, Argos, and the gods, the local,

*T is right addressing — those with me the partners

34 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

In this return and right things done the city
 Of Priamos: gods who, from no tongue hearing
 The rights o' the cause, for Ilion's fate manslaughter-
 t'rous 820

Into the bloody vase, not oscillating,
 Put the vote-pebbles, while, o' the rival vessel,
 Hope rose up to the lip-edge: filled it was not.
 By smoke the captured city is still conspicuous:
 Ate's burnt offerings live: and, dying with them,
 The ash sends forth the fulsome blast of riches.
 Of these things, to the gods grace many-minded
 'T is right I render, since both nets outrageous
 We built them round with, and, for sake of woman,
 It did the city to dust — the Argeian monster, 830
 The horse's nestling, the shield-bearing people
 That made a leap, at setting of the Pleiads,
 And, vaulting o'er the tower, the raw-flesh-feeding
 Lion licked up his fill of blood tyrannic.
 I to the gods indeed prolonged this preface;
 But — as for *thy* thought, I remember hearing —
 I say the same, and thou co-pleader hast me.
 Since few of men this faculty is born with —
 To honor, without grudge, their friend, successful.
 For moody, on the heart, a poison seated 840
 Its burthen doubles to who gained the sickness:
 By his own griefs he is himself made heavy,
 And out-of-door prosperity seeing groans at.
 Knowing, I'd call (for well have I experienced)
 "Fellowship's mirror," "phantom of a shadow,"
 Those seeming to be mighty gracious to me:
 While just Odusseus — he who sailed not willing —
 When joined on, was to me the ready trace-horse.
 This of him, whether dead or whether living,
 I say. For other city-and-gods' concernment — 850
 Appointing common courts, in full assemblage

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 35

We will consult. And as for what holds seemly —
 How it may lasting stay well, must be counselled:
 While what has need of medicines Paionian
 We, either burning or else cutting kindly,
 Will make endeavor to turn pain from sickness.
 And now into the domes and homes by altar
 Going, I to the gods first raise the right-hand —
 They who, far sending, back again have brought me.
 And Victory, since she followed, fixed remain she!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Men, citizens, Argeians here, my worships! 861
 I shall not shame me, consort-loving manners
 To tell before you: for in time there dies off
 The diffidence from people. Not from others
 Learning, I of myself will tell the hard life
 I bore so long as this man was 'neath Ilion.
 First: for a woman, from the male divided,
 To sit at home alone, is monstrous evil —
 Hearing the many rumors back-revenging: 869
 And for now This to come, now That bring after
 Woe, and still worse woe, bawling in the household!
 And truly, if so many wounds had chanced on
 My husband here, as homeward used to dribble
 Report, he's pierced more than a net to speak of!
 While, were he dying (as the words abounded)
 A triple-bodied Geruon the Second,
 Plenty above — for loads below I count not —
 Of earth a three-share cloak he'd boast of taking,
 Once only dying in each several figure!
 Because of suchlike rumors back-revenging, 880
 Many the halts from my neck, above head,
 Others than *I* loosed — loosed from neck by main
 force!
 From this cause, sure, the boy stands not beside me—

36 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Possessor of our troth-plights, thine and mine too —
 As ought Orestes: be not thou astonished!
 For, him brings up our well-disposed guest-captive
 Strophios the Phokian — ills that told on both sides
 To me predicting — both of thee 'neath Iliion
 The danger, and if anarchy's mob-uproar 880
 Should overthrow thy council; since 't is born with
 Mortals, — whoe'er has fallen, the more to kick him.
 Such an excuse, I think, no cunning carries!
 As for myself — why, of my wails the rushing
 Fountains are dried up: not in them a drop more!
 And in my late-to-bed eyes I have damage,
 Bewailing what concerned thee, those torch-hold-
 ings

Forever unattended to. In dreams — why,
 Beneath the light wing-beats o' the gnat, I woke up
 As he went buzzing — sorrows that concerned thee
 Seeing, that filled more than their fellow-sleep-time.
 Now, all this having suffered, from soul grief-free 901
 I would style this man here the dog o' the stables,
 The saviour forestay of the ship, the high roof's
 Ground-prop, son sole-begotten to his father,
 — Ay, land appearing to the sailors past hope,
 Loveliest day to see after a tempest,
 To the wayfaring-one athirst a well-spring,
 — The joy, in short, of 'scaping all that 's — fatal!
 I judge him worth addresses such as these are
 — Envy stand off! — for many those old evils 910
 We underwent. And now, to me — dear headship! —
 Dismount thou from this car, not earthward setting
 The foot of thine, O king, that 's Iliion's spoiler!
 Slave-maids, why tarry? — whose the task allotted
 To strew the soil o' the road with carpet-spreadings.
 Immediately be purple-strewn the pathway,
 So that to home unhop'd may lead him — Justice!

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 37

As for the rest, care shall — by no sleep conquered —
Dispose things — justly (gods to aid!) appointed.

AGAMEMNON

Offspring of Leda, of my household warder, 920
Suitably to my absence has thou spoken,
For long the speech thou didst outstretch! But aptly
To praise — from others ought to go this favor.
And for the rest, — not me, in woman's fashion,
Mollify, nor — as mode of barbarous man is —
To me gape forth a groundward-falling clamor!
Nor, strewing it with garments, make my passage
Envied! Gods, sure, with these behoves we honor:
But, for a mortal on these varied beauties
To walk — to me, indeed, is nowise fear-free. 930
I say — as man, not god, to me do homage!
Apart from foot-mats both and varied vestures,
Renown is loud, and — not to lose one's senses,
God's greatest gift. Behoves we him call happy
Who has brought life to end in loved well-being.
If all things I might manage thus — brave man, I!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Come now, this say, nor feign a feeling to me!

AGAMEMNON

With feeling, know indeed, I do not tamper!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Vowed'st thou to the gods, in fear, to act thus?

AGAMEMNON

If any, I well knew resolve I outspoke. 940

38 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

KLUTAIMNESTRA

What think'st thou Priamos had done, thus victor?

AGAMEMNON

On varied vests — I do think — he had passaged.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Then, do not, struck with awe at human censure. . . .

AGAMEMNON

Well, popular mob-outcry much avails too.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Ay, but the unenvied is not the much valued.

AGAMEMNON

Sure, 't is no woman's part to long for battle.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Why, to the prosperous, even suits a beating.

AGAMEMNON

What? thou this beating us in war dost prize too?

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Persuade thee! power, for once, grant *me* — and
willing!

AGAMEMNON

But if this seem so to thee — shoes, let some one ⁸⁸⁰
Loose under, quick — foot's serviceable carriage!
And me, on these sea-products walking, may no

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 39

Grudge from a distance, from the god's eye, strike
at!

For great shame were my strewment-spoiling —
riches

Spoiling with feet, and silver-purchased textures!
Of these things, thus then. But this female-stranger
Tenderly take inside! Who conquers mildly
God, from afar, benignantly regardeth.

For, willing, no one wears a yoke that 's servile:
And she, of many valuables, outpicked 960
The flower, the army's gift, myself has followed.
So, — since to hear thee, I am brought about thus, —
I go into the palace — purples treading.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

There is the sea — and what man shall exhaust it? —
Feeding much purple's worth-its-weight-in-silver
Dye, ever fresh and fresh, our garments' tincture;
At home, such wealth, king, we begin — by gods'
help —

With having, and to lack, the household knows not.
Of many garments had I vowed a treading
(In oracles if fore-enjoined the household) 970

Of this dear soul the safe-return-price scheming!
For, root existing, foliage goes up houses,
O'erspreading shadow against Seirios dog-star;
And, thou returning to the hearth domestic,
Warmth, yea, in winter dost thou show returning.
And when, too, Zeus works, from the green-grape
acid,

Wine — then, already, cool in houses cometh —
The perfect man his home perambulating!
Zeus, Zeus Perfecter, these my prayers perfect thou!
Thy care be — yea — of things thou mayst make
perfect! 980

40 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

CHOROS

Wherefore to me, this fear —
Groundedly stationed here
Fronting my heart, the portent-watcher — flits she?
Wherefore should prophet-play
The uncalled and unpaid lay,
Nor — having spat forth fear, like bad dreams —
sits she

On the mind's throne beloved — well-suasive Bold-
ness?

For time, since, by a throw of all the hands,
The boat's stern-cables touched the sands,
Has passed from youth to oldness, — 990
When under Ilion rushed the ship-borne bands.

And from my eyes I learn —
Being myself my witness — their return.
Yet, all the same, without a lyre, my soul,
Itself its teacher too, chants from within
Erinus' dirge, not having now the whole
Of Hope's dear boldness: nor my inwards sin —
The heart that's rolled in whirls against the mind
Justly presageful of a fate behind. 999
But I pray — things false, from my hope, may fall
Into the fate that's not-fulfilled at-all!

Especially at least, of health that's great
The term's insatiable: for, its weight
— A neighbor, with a common wall between —
Ever will sickness lean;
And destiny, her course pursuing straight,
Has struck man's ship against a reef unseen.
Now, when a portion, rather than the treasure,
Fear casts from sling, with peril in right measure,
It has not sunk — the universal freight, 1010

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 41

(With misery freighted over-full)
Nor has fear whelmed the hull.
Then too the gift of Zeus,
Two-handedly profuse,
Even from the furrows' yield for yearly use
Has done away with famine, the disease;
But blood of man to earth once falling — deadly,
black —

In times ere these, —
Who may, by singing spells, call back?
Zeus had not else stopped one who rightly knew 1090
The way to bring the dead again.
But, did not an appointed Fate constrain
The Fate from gods, to bear no more than due,
My heart, outstripping what tongue utters,
Would have all out: which now, in darkness, mutters
Moodily grieved, nor ever hopes to find
How she a word in season may unwind
From out the enkindling mind.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Take thyself in, thou too — I say, Kassandra!
Since Zeus — not angrily — in household placed
thee 1090
Partaker of hand-sprinklings, with the many
Slaves stationed, his the Owner's altar close to.
Descend from out this car, nor be high-minded!
And truly they do say Alkinené's child once
Bore being sold, slaves' barley-bread his living.
If, then, necessity of this lot o'erbalance,
Much is the favor of old-wealthy masters:
For those who, never hoping, made fine harvest
Are harsh to slaves in all things, beyond measure.
Thou hast — with us — such usage as law war-
rants. 1040

42 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

CHOROS

To thee it was, she paused plain speech from speaking.

Being inside the fatal nets — obeying,
Thou mayst obey: but thou mayst disobey too!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Why, if she is not, in the swallow's fashion,
Possessed of voice that's unknown and barbaric,
I, with speech — speaking in mind's scope — persuade her.

CHOROS

Follow! The best — as things now stand — she speaks of.

Obey thou, leaving this thy car-enthronement!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Well, with this thing at door, for me no leisure 1049
To waste time: as concerns the hearth midnavelled,
Already stand the sheep for fireside slaying
By those who never hoped to have such favor.
If thou, then, aught of this wilt do, delay not!
But if thou, being witless, tak'st no word in,
Speak thou, instead of voice, with hand as Kars do!

CHOROS

She seems a plain interpreter in need of,
The stranger! and her way — a beast's new-captured!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Why, she is mad, sure, — hears her own bad senses, —
Who, while she comes, leaving a town new-captured,

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 43

Yet knows not how to bear the bit o' the bridle 1000
Before she has out-frothed her bloody fierceness.
Not I — throwing away more words — will shamed
be!

CHOROS

But I, — for I compassionate, — will chafe not.
Come, O unhappy one, this car vacating,
Yielding to this necessity, prove yoke's use!

KASSANDRA

Otototoi, Gods, Earth, —
Apollon, Apollon!

CHOROS

Why didst thou "ototoi" concerning Loxias?
Since he is none such as to suit a mourner.

KASSANDRA

Otototoi, Gods, Earth, — 1070
Apollon, Apollon!

CHOROS

Ill-boding here again the god invokes she
— Nowise empowered in woes to stand by helpful.

KASSANDRA

Apollon, Apollon,
Guard of the ways, my destroyer!
For thou has quite, this second time, destroyed me.

CHOROS

To prophesy she seems of her own evils:
Remains the god-gift to the slave-soul present.

44 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

KASSANDRA

Apollon, Apollon,
Guard of the ways, my destroyer! 1080
Ha, whither hast thou led me? to what roof now?

CHOROS

To the Atreidai's roof: if this thou know'st not,
I tell it thee, nor this wilt thou call falsehood.

KASSANDRA

How! How!
God-hated, then! Of many a crime it knew —
Self-slaying evils, halters too:
Man's-shambles, blood-besprinkler of the ground!

CHOROS

She seems to be good-nosed, the stranger: dog-like,
She snuffs indeed the victims she will find there.

KASSANDRA

How! How! 1090
By the witnesses here I am certain now!
These children bewailing their slaughters — flesh
dressed in the fire
And devoured by their sire!

CHOROS

Ay, we have heard of thy soothsaying glory,
Doubtless: but prophets none are we in scent of!

KASSANDRA

Ah, gods, what ever does she meditate?
What this new anguish great?
Great in the house here she meditates ill

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 45

Such as friends cannot bear, cannot cure it: and still
Off stands all Resistance 1100
Afar in the distance!

CHOROS

Of these I witless am — these prophesyings.
But those I knew: for the whole city bruits them.

KASSANDRA

Ah, unhappy one, this thou consummatest?
Thy husband, thy bed's common guest,
In the bath having brightened . . . How shall I
declare
Consummation? It soon will be there:
For hand after hand she outstretches,
At life as she reaches! 1109

CHOROS

Nor yet I've gone with thee! for — after riddles —
Now, in blind oracles, I feel resourceless.

KASSANDRA

Eh, eh, papai, papai,
What this, I espy?
Some net of Haides undoubtedly!
Nay, rather, the snare
Is she who has share
In his bed, who takes part in the murder there!
But may a revolt —
Unceasing assault —
On the Race, raise a shout 1190
Sacrificial, about
A victim — by stoning —
For murder atoning!

46 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

CHOROS

What this Erinus which i' the house thou callest
To raise her cry? Not me thy word enlightens!
To my heart has run
A drop of the crocus-dye:
Which makes for those
On earth by the spear that lie,
A common close
With life's descending sun.
Swift is the curse begun!

1130

KASSANDRA

How! How!
See — see quick!
Keep the bull from the cow!
In the vesture she catching him, strikes him now
With the black-horned trick,
And he falls in the watery vase!
Of the craft-killing caldron I tell thee the case!

CHOROS

I would not boast to be a topping critic
Of oracles: but to some sort of evil
I liken these. From oracles, what good speech
To mortals, beside, is sent?
It comes of their evils: these arts word-abounding
that sing the event
Bring the fear 't is their office to teach.

1140

KASSANDRA

Ah me, ah me —
Of me unhappy, evil-destined fortunes!
For I bewail my proper woe
As, mine with his, all into one I throw.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 47

Why hast thou hither me unhappy brought? 1150
— Unless that I should die with him — for naught!
What else was sought?

CHOROS

Thou art some mind-mazed creature, god-pos-
sessed:
And all about thyself dost wail
A lay — no lay!
Like some brown nightingale
Insatiable of noise, who — well-away! —
From her unhappy breast
Keeps moaning Itus, Itus, and his life
With evils, flourishing on each side, rife. 1160

KASSANDRA

Ah me, ah me,
The fate o' the nightingale, the clear resounder!
For a body wing-borne have the gods cast round
her,
And sweet existence, from misfortunes free:
But for myself remains a sundering
With spear, the two-edged thing!

CHOROS

Whence hast thou this on-rushing god-involving
pain
And spasms in vain?
For, things that terrify,
With changing unintelligible cry 1170
Thou strikest up in tune, yet all the while
After that Orthian style!
Whence hast thou limits to the oracular road,
That evils bode?

48 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

KASSANDRA

Ah me, the nuptials, the nuptials of Paris, the deadly
to friends!

Ah me, of Skamandros the draught
Paternal! There once, to these ends,

On thy banks was I brought,
The unhappy! And now, by Kokutos and Acheron's
shore

I shall soon be, it seems, these my oracles singing
once more! 1180

CHOROS

Why this word, plain too much,
Hast thou uttered? A babe might learn of such!
I am struck with a bloody bite — here under —
At the fate woe-wreaking
Of thee shrill shrieking:
To me who hear — a wonder!

KASSANDRA

Ah me, the toils — the toils of the city

The wholly destroyed: ah, pity,

Of the sacrificings my father made

In the ramparts' aid — 1190

Much slaughter of grass-fed flocks — that afforded
no cure

That the city should not, as it does now, the burthen
endure!

But I, with the soul on fire,

Soon to the earth shall cast me and expire.

CHOROS

To things, on the former consequent,
Again hast thou given vent:

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 49

And 't is some evil-meaning fiend doth move thee,
Heavily falling from above thee,
To melodize thy sorrows — else, in singing,
Calamitous, death-bringing! 1200
And of all this the end
I am without resource to apprehend.

KASSANDRA

Well then, the oracle from veils no longer
Shall be outlooking, like a bride new-married:
But bright it seems, against the sun's uprisings
Breathing, to penetrate thee: so as, wavelike,
To wash against the rays a woe much greater
Than this. I will no longer teach by riddles.
And witness, running with me, that of evils
Done long ago, I nosing track the footstep! 1210
For, this same roof here — never quits a Choros
One-voiced, not well-tuned since no "well" it utters:
And truly having drunk, to get more courage,
Man's blood — the Komos keeps within the house-
hold
— Hard to be sent outside — of sister Furies:
They hymn their hymn — within the house close
sitting —
The first beginning curse: in turn spit forth at
The Brother's bed, to him who spurned it hostile
Have I missed aught, or hit I like a bowman? 1219
False prophet am I, — knock at doors, a babbler?
Henceforward witness, swearing now, I know not
By other's word the old sins of this household!

CHOROS

And how should oath, bond honorably binding,
Become thy cure? No less I wonder at thee

50 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

— That thou, beyond sea reared, a strange-tongued
city
Shouldst hit in speaking, just as if thou stood'st by!

KASSANDRA

Prophet Apollon put me in this office.

CHOROS

What, even though a god, with longing smitten?

KASSANDRA

At first, indeed, shame was to me to say this. 1229

CHOROS

For, more relaxed grows every one who fares well.

KASSANDRA

But he was athlete to me — huge grace breathing!

CHOROS

Well, to the work of children, went ye law's way?

KASSANDRA

Having consented, I played false to Loxias.

CHOROS

Already when the wits inspired possessed of?

KASSANDRA

Already townsmen all their woes I foretold.

CHOROS

How wast thou then unhurt by Loxias' anger?

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 51

KASSANDRA

I no one aught persuaded, when I sinned thus.

CHOROS

To us, at least, now sooth to say thou seemest.

KASSANDRA

Halloo, halloo, ah, evils!

Again, straightforward foresight's fearful labor 1240

Whirls me, distracting with prelusive last-lays!

Behold ye those there, in the household seated, —

Youngones, — of dreams approaching to the figures?

Children, as if they died by their beloveds —

Handsthey havefilled with flesh, the meal domestic —

Entrails and vitals both, most piteous burthen,

Plain they are holding! — which their father tasted!

For this, I say, plans punishment a certain

Lion ignoble, on the bed that wallows,

House-guard (ah, me!) to the returning master 1250

— Mine, since to bear the slavish yoke behoves me!

The ship's commander, Ilion's desolator,

Knows not what things the tongue of the lewd she-
dog

Speaking, outspreading, shiny-souled, in fashion

Of Ate hid, will reach to, by ill fortune!

Such things she dares — the female, the male's slayer!

She is . . . how calling her the hateful bite-beast

May I hit the mark? Some amphisbaina, — Skulla

Housing in rocks, of mariners the mischief, 1259

Revelling Haides' mother, — curse, no truce with,

Breathing at friends! How piously she shouted,

The all-courageous, as at turn of battle!

She seems to joy at the back-bringing safety!

Of this, too, if I naught persuade, all's one! Why?

52 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

What is to be will come. And soon thou, present,
"True prophet all too much" wilt pitying style me.

CHOROS

Thuestes' feast, indeed, on flesh of children,
I went with, and I shuddered. Fear too holds me
Listing what's true as life, nowise out-imagined.

KASSANDRA

I say, thou Agamemnon's fate shalt look on. 1270

CHOROS

Speak good words, O unhappy! Set mouth sleeping!

KASSANDRA

But Paian stands in no stead to the speech here.

CHOROS

Nay, if the thing be near: but never be it!

KASSANDRA

Thou, indeed, prayest: they to kill are busy.

CHOROS

Of what man is it ministered, this sorrow?

KASSANDRA

There again, wide thou look'st of my foretellings.

CHOROS

For, the fulfiller's scheme I have not gone with.

KASSANDRA

And yet too well I know the speech Hellenic.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 53

CHOROS

For Puthian oracles, thy speech, and hard too.

KASSANDRA

Papai: what fire this! and it comes upon me! 1230
Ototoi, Lukeion, Apollon, ah me — me!

She, the two-footed lioness that sleeps with
The wolf, in absence of the generous lion,
Kill me the unhappy one: and as a poison
Brewing, to put my price too in the anger,
She vows, against her mate this weapon whetting
To pay him back the bringing me, with slaughter.
Why keep I then these things to make me laughed
at,

Both wands and, round my neck, oracular fillets?
Thee, at least, ere my own fate will I ruin: 1230
Go, to perdition falling! Boons exchange we —
Some other Ate in my stead make wealthy!
See there — himself, Apollon stripping from me
The oracular garment! having looked upon me
— Even in these adornments, laughed by friends at,
As good as foes, i' the balance weighed: and vainly —
For, called crazed stroller, — as I had been gipsy,
Beggar, unhappy, starved to death, — I bore it.
And now the Prophet — prophet me undoing,
Has led away to these so deadly fortunes! 1300
Instead of my sire's altar, waits the hack-block
She struck with first warm bloody sacrificing!
Yet nowise unavenged of gods will death be:
For there shall come another, our avenger,
The mother-slaying scion, father's doomsman:
Fugitive, wanderer, from this land an exile,
Back shall he come, — for friends, copestone these
curses!

54 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

For there is sworn a great oath from the gods that
Him shall bring hither his fallen sire's prostration.
Why make I then, like an indweller, moaning? 1510
Since at the first I foresaw Ilion's city
Suffering as it has suffered: and who took it,
Thus by the judgment of the gods are faring.
I go, will suffer, will submit to dying!
But, Haides' gates — these same I call, I speak to,
And pray that on an opportune blow chancing,
Without a struggle, — blood the calm death bringing
In easy outflow, — I this eye may close up!

CHOROS

O much unhappy, but, again, much learned 1519
Woman, long hast thou outstretched! But if truly
Thou knowest thine own fate, how comes that, like
to
A god-led steer, to altar bold thou treadest?

KASSANDRA

There's no avoidance, — strangers, no! Some time
more!

CHOROS

He last is, anyhow, by time advantaged.

KASSANDRA

It comes, the day: I shall by flight gain little.

CHOROS

But know thou patient art from thy brave spirit!

KASSANDRA

Such things hears no one of the happy-fortuned.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 55

CHOROS

But gloriously to die — for man is grace, sure.

KASSANDRA

Ah, sire, for thee and for thy noble children!

CHOROS

But what thing is it? What fear turns thee back-
wards? 1330

KASSANDRA

Alas, alas!

CHOROS

Why this "Alas!" if 't is no spirit's loathing?

KASSANDRA

Slaughterblood-dripping does the household smell of!

CHOROS

How else? This scent is of hearth-sacrifices.

KASSANDRA

Such kind of steam as from a tomb is proper!

CHOROS

No Surian honor to the House thou speak'st of!

KASSANDRA

But I will go, — even in the household wailing
My fate and Agamemnon's. Life suffice me!

Ah, strangers!

I cry not "ah" — as bird at bush — through terror 1339

56 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Idly! to me, the dead this much bear witness:
When, for me — woman, there shall die a woman,
And, for a man ill-wived, a man shall perish!
This hospitality I ask as dying.

CHOROS

O sufferer, thee — thy foretold fate I pity.

KASSANDRA

Yet once for all, to speak a speech, I fain am:
No dirge, mine for myself! The sun I pray to,
Fronting his last light! — to my own avengers —
That from my hateful slayers they exact too 1349
Pay for the dead slave — easy-managed hand's work!

CHOROS

Alas for mortal matters! Happy-fortuned, —
Why, any shade would turn them: if unhappy,
By throws the wettingsponge has spoiled the picture!
And more by much in mortals this I pity.
The being well-to-do —
Insatiate a desire of this
Born with all mortals is,
Nor any is there who
Well-being forces off, aoints
From roofs whereat a finger points, 1350
“No more come in!” exclaiming. This man, too,
To take the city of Priamos did the celestials give,
And, honored by the god, he homeward comes;
But now if, of the former, he shall pay
The blood back, and, for those who ceased to live,
Dying, for deaths in turn new punishment he
dooms —
Who, being mortal, would not pray

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 57

With an unmischievous
Daimon to have been born — who would not, hearing thus?

AGAMEMNON

Ah me! I am struck — a right-aimed stroke within
me! 1570

CHOROS

Silence! Who is it shouts “stroke” — “right-aimedly” a wounded one?

AGAMEMNON

Ah me! indeed again, — a second, struck by!

CHOROS

This work seems to me completed by this “Ah me”
of the king’s;
But we somehow may together share in solid counsellings.

CHOROS 1

I, in the first place, my opinion tell you:
— To cite the townsmen, by help-cry, to house here.

CHOROS 2

To me, it seems we ought to fall upon them
At quickest — prove the fact by sword fresh-flowing!

CHOROS 3

And I, of such opinion the partaker,
Vote — to do something: not to wait — the main
point! 1580

58 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

CHOROS 4

'T is plain to see: for they prelude as though of
A tyranny the signs they gave the city.

CHOROS 5

For we waste time; while they, — this waiting's glory
Treading to ground, — allow the hand no slumber.

CHOROS 6

I know not — chancing on some plan — to tell it:
'T is for the doer to plan of the deed also.

CHOROS 7

And I am such another: since I'm schemeless
How to raise up again by words — a dead man!

CHOROS 8

What, and, protracting life, shall we give way thus
To the disgracers of our home, these rulers? 1390

CHOROS 9

Why, 't is unbearable: but to die is better:
For death than tyranny is the riper finish!

CHOROS 10

What, by the testifying "Ah me" of him,
Shall we prognosticate the man as perished?

CHOROS 11

We must quite know ere speak these things con-
cerning:
For to conjecture and "quite know" are two things.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 59

CHOROS 12

This same to praise I from all sides abound in —
Clearly to know — Atreides, what he's doing!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Much having been before to purpose spoken,
The opposite to say I shall not shamed be: 1400
For how should one, to enemies, — in semblance,
Friends, — enmity proposing, — sorrow's net-frame
Enclose, a height superior to outleaping?
To me, indeed, this struggle of old — not mindless
Of an old victory — came: with time, I grant you!
I stand where I have struck, things once accom-
plished:

And so have done, — and this deny I shall not, —
As that his fate was nor to fly nor ward off.

A wrap-round with no outlet, as for fishes, 1409
I fence about him — the rich woe of the garment:
I strike him twice, and in a double "Ah-me!"
He let his limbs go — *there!* And to him, fallen,
The third blow add I, giving — of Below-ground
Zeus, guardian of the dead — the votive favor.

Thus in the mind of him he rages, falling,
And blowing forth a brisk blood-spatter, strikes me
With the dark drop of slaughterous dew — rejoicing
No less than, at the god-given dewy-comfort,
The sown-stuff in its birth-throes from the calyx.
Since so these things are, — Argives, my revered
here, — 1420'

Ye may rejoice — if ye rejoice: but I — boast!
If it were fit on corpse to pour libation,
That would be right — right over and above, too!
The cup of evils in the house he, having
Filled with such curses, himself coming drinks of.

60 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

CHOROS

We wonder at thy tongue: since bold-mouthed truly
Is she who in such speech boasts o'er her husband!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Ye test me as I were a witless woman:
But I — with heart intrepid — to you knowers 1429
Say (and thou — if thou wilt or praise or blame me,
Comes to the same) — this man is Agamemnon,
My husband, dead, the work of the right hand here,
Ay, of a just artificer: so things are.

CHOROS

What evil, O woman, food or drink, earth-bred
Or sent from the flowing sea,
Of such having fed
Didst thou set on thee
This sacrifice
And popular cries
Of a curse on thy head? 1440
Off thou hast thrown him, off hast cut
The man from the city: but —
Off from the city thyself shalt be
Cut — to the citizens
A hate immense!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Now, indeed, thou adjudgest exile to me,
And citizens' hate, and to have popular curses:
Nothing of this against the man here bringing,
Who, no more awe-checked than as 't were a beast's
fate, —
With sheep abundant in the well-fleeced graze-
flocks, — 1450

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 61

Sacrificed *his* child, — dearest fruit of travail
 To me, — as song-spell against Threbian blowings.
 Not *him* did it behove thee hence to banish
 — Pollution's penalty? But hearing *my* deeds
 Justicer rough thou art! Now, this I tell thee:
 To threaten thus — me, one prepared to have thee
 (On like conditions, thy hand conquering) o'er me
 Rule: but if God the opposite ordain us,
 Thou shalt learn — late taught, certes — to be
 modest.

CHOROS

Greatly-intending thou art: 1460
 Much-mindful, too, hast thou cried
 (Since thy mind, with its slaughter-outpouring part,
 Is frantic) that over the eyes, a patch
 Of blood — with blood to match —
 In plain for a pride!
 Yet still, bereft of friends, thy fate
 Is — blow with blow to expiate!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

And this thou hearest — of my oaths, just warrant!
 By who fulfilled things for my daughter, Justice,
 Ate, Erinus, — by whose help I slew him, — 1470
 Not mine the fancy — Fear will tread my palace
 So long as on my hearth there burns a fire,
 Aigisthos as before well-caring for me;
 Since he to me is shield, no small, of boldness.
 Here does he lie — outrager of this female,
 Dainty of all the Chriseids under Ilion;
 And she — the captive, the soothsayer also
 And couchmate of this man, oracle-speaker,
 Faithful bed-fellow, — ay, the sailors' benches
 They wore in common, nor unpunished did so, 1480

62 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Since he is — thus! While, as for her, — swan-
 fashion,
 Her latest having chanted, — dying wailing
 She lies, — to him, a sweetheart: me she brought to—
 My bed's by-nicety — the whet of dalliance.

CHOROS

Alas, that some
 Fate would come
 Upon us in quickness —
 Neither much sickness
 Neither bed-keeping —
 And bear unended sleeping, 1490
 Now that subdued
 Is our keeper, the kindest of mood!
 Having borne, for a woman's sake, much strife —
 By a woman he withered from life!
 Ah me!
 Law-breaking Helena who, one,
 Hast many, so many souls undone
 'Neath Troia! and now the consummated
 Much-memorable curse
 Hast thou made flower-forth, red 1500
 With the blood no rains disperse,
 That which was then in the House —
 Strife all-subduing, the woe of a spouse.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Nowise, of death the fate —
 Burdened by these things — supplicate!
 Nor on Helena turn thy wrath
 As the man-destroyer, as "she who hath,
 Being but one,
 Many and many a soul undone

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 63

Of the men, the Danaoi" — 1510
And wrought immense annoy!

CHOROS

Daimon, who fallest
Upon this household and the double-raced
Tantalidai, a rule, minded like theirs displaced,
Thou rulest me with, now,
Whose heart thou gallest!
And on the body, like a hateful crow,
Stationed, all out of tune, his chant to chant
Doth Something vaunt!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Now, of a truth, hast thou set upright 1520
Thy mouth's opinion, —
Naming the Sprite,
The triply gross,
O'er the race that has dominion:
For through him it is that Eros
The carnage-licker
In the belly is bred: ere ended quite
Is the elder throe — new ichor!

CHOROS

Certainly, great of might
And heavy of wrath, the Sprite 1530
Thou tellest of, in the palace
(Woe, woe!)
— An evil tale of a fate
By Ate's malice
Rendered insatiate!
Oh, oh, —
King, king, how shall I bewEEP thee?

64 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

From friendly soul whatever say?
Thou liest where webs of the spider o'ersweep thee
In impious death, life breathing away. 1540
O me — me!
This couch, not free!
By a slavish death subdued thou art,
From the hand, by the two-edged dart.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Thou boastest this deed to be mine:
But leave off styling me
"The Agamemnonian wife!"
For, showing himself in sign
Of the spouse of the corpse thou dost see,
Did the ancient bitter avenging-ghost 1550
Of Atreus, savage host,
Pay the man here as price —
A full-grown for the young one's sacrifice.

CHOROS

That no cause, indeed, of this killing art thou,
Who shall be witness-bearer?
How shall he bear it — how?
But the sire's avenging-ghost might be in the deed
a sharer.
He is forced on and on
By the kin-born flowing of blood,
— Black Ares: to where, having gone, 1560
He shall leave off, flowing done,
At the frozen-child's-flesh food.
King, king, how shall I bewep thee?
From friendly soul whatever say?
Thou liest where webs of the spider o'ersweep
thee

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 65

In impious death, life breathing away.
O me — me!
This couch, not free!
By a slavish death subdued thou 'art,
From the hand, by the two-edged dart. 1570

KLUTAIMNESTRA

No death "unfit for the free"
Do I think this man 's to be:
For did not himself a slavish curse
To his household decree?
But the scion of him, myself did nurse —
That much-bewailed Iphigeneia, he
Having done well by, — and as well, nor worse,
Been done to, — let him not in Haides loudly
Bear himself proudly!
Being by sword-destroying death amerced 1580
For that sword's punishment himself inflicted first.

CHOROS

I at a loss am left —
Of a feasible scheme of mind bereft —
Where I may turn: for the house is falling:
I fear the bloody crash of the rain
That ruins the roof as it bursts amain
The warning-drop
Has come to a stop.
Destiny doth Justice whet
For other deed of hurt, on other whetstones yet. 1590
Woe, earth, earth — would thou hadst taken *me*
Ere I saw the man I see,
On the pallet-bed
Of the silver-sided bath-vase, dead!
Who is it shall bury him, who

66 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Sing his dirge? Can it be true
 That *thou* wilt dare this same to do —
 Having slain thy husband, thine own,
 To make his funeral moan:
 And for the soul of him, in place 1000
 Of his mighty deeds, a graceless grace
 To wickedly institute? By whom
 Shall the tale of praise o'er the tomb
 At the god-like man be sent —
 From the truth of his mind as he toils intent?

KLUTAIMNESTRA

It belongs not to thee to declare
 This object of care!
 By us did he fall — down there!
 Did he die — down there! and down, no less,
 We will bury him there, and not beneath 1010
 The wails of the household over his death:
 But Iphigeneia, — with kindness, —
 His daughter, — as the case requires,
 Facing him full, at the rapid-flowing
 Passage of Groans shall — both hands throwing
 Around him — kiss that kindest of sires!

CHOROS

This blame comes in the place of blame:
 Hard battle it is to judge each claim.
 "He is borne away who bears away:
 And the killer has all to pay." 1020
 And this remains while Zeus is remaining,
 "The doer shall suffer in time" — for, such his
 ordaining.
 Who may cast out of the House its cursed brood?
 The race is to Ate glued!

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 67

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Thou hast gone into this oracle
With a true result. For me, then, — I will
— To the Daimon of the Pleisthenidai
Making an oath — with all these things comply
Hard as they are to bear. For the rest —
Going from out this House, a guest, 1630
May he wear some other family
To naught, with the deaths of kin by kin!
And, — keeping a little part of my goods, —
Wholly am I contented in
Having expelled from the royal House
These frenzied moods
The mutually-murderous.

AIGISTHOS

O light propitious of day justice-bringing!
I may say truly, now, that men's avengers, 1639
The gods from high, of earth behold the sorrows —
Seeing, as I have, i' the spun robes of the Erinues,
This man here lying, — sight to me how pleasant! —
His father's hands' contrivances repaying.
For Atreus, this land's lord, of this man father,
Thuestes, my own father — to speak clearly —
His brother too, — being i' the rule contested, —
Drove forth to exile from both town and household:
And, coming back, to the hearth turned, a suppliant,
Wretched Thuestes found the fate assured him
— Not to die, bloodying his paternal threshold 1650
Just there: but host-wise this man's impious father
Atreus, soul-keenly more than kindly, — seeming
To joyous hold a flesh-day, — to my father
Served up a meal, the flesh of his own children.
The feet indeed and the hands' top divisions

68 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

He hid, high up and isolated sitting:
But, their unshowing parts in ignorance taking,
He forthwith eats food — as thou seest — perdition
To the race: and then, 'ware of the deed ill-omened,
He shrieked O! — falls back, vomiting, from the
carnage, 1660

And fate on the Pelopidai past bearing
He prays down — putting in his curse together
The kicking down o' the feast — that so might
perish

The race of Pleisthenes entire: and thence is
That it is given thee to see this man prostrate.
And I was rightly of this slaughter stitch-man:
Since me, — being third from ten, — with my poor
father

He drives out — being then a babe in swathe-bands:
But, grown up, back again has justice brought me:
And of this man I got hold — being without-doors—
Fitting together the whole scheme of ill-will. 1671
So, sweet, in fine, even to die were to me,
Seeing, as I have, this man i' the toils of justice!

CHOROS

Aigisthos, arrogance in ills I love not.
Dost thou say — willing, thou didst kill the man
here,
And, alone, plot this lamentable slaughter?
I say — thy head in justice will escape not
The people's throwing — know that! — stones and
curses! 1678

AIGISTHOS

Thou such things soundest — seated at the lower
Oarage to those who rule at the ship's mid-bench?
Thou shalt know, being old, how heavy is teaching

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 69

To one of the like age — bidden be modest!
But chains and old age and the pangs of fasting
Stand out before all else in teaching, — prophets
At souls'-cure! Dost not, seeing aught, see this too?
Against goads kick not, lest tript-up thou suffer!

CHOROS

Woman, thou, — of him coming new from battle
Houseguard — thy husband's bed the while dis-
gracing, —
For the Army-leader didst thou plan this fate too?

AIGISTHOS

These words too are of groans the prime-begetters!
Truly a tongue opposed to Orpheus hast thou: 1691
For he led all things by his voice's grace-charm,
But thou, upstirring them by these wild yelpings,
Wilt lead them! Forced, thou wilt appear the tamer!

CHOROS

So — thou shalt be my king then of the Argeians —
Who, not when for this man his fate thou plannedst,
Daredst to do this deed — thyself the slayer!

AIGISTHOS

For, to deceive him was the wife's part, certes:
I was looked after — foe, ay, old-begotten!
But out of this man's wealth will I endeavor 1700
To rule the citizens: and the no-man-minder
— Him will I heavily yoke — by no means trace-
horse,
A corned-up colt! but that bad friend in darkness,
Famine its housemate, shall behold him gentle.

70 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

CHOROS

Why then, this man here, from a coward spirit,
Didst not thou slay thyself? But, — helped, — a
woman,
The country's pest, and that of gods o' the country,
Killed him! Orestes, where may he see light now?
That coming hither back, with gracious fortune, 1700
Of both these he may be the all-conquering slayer?

AIGISTHOS

But since this to do thou thinkest — and not talk—
thou soon shalt know!
Up then, comrades dear! the proper thing to do—
not distant this!

CHOROS

Up then! hilt in hold, his sword let every one aright
dispose!

AIGISTHOS

Ay, but I myself too, hilt in hold, do not refuse to die.

CHOROS

Thou wilt die, thou say'st, to who accept it. We
the chance demand.

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Nowise, O belovedest of men, may we do other ills!
To have reaped away these, even, is a harvest much
to me.
Go, both thou and these the old men, to the homes
appointed each,
Ere ye suffer! It behoved one do these things just
as we did:

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 71

And if of these troubles there should be enough —
we may assent 1790
— By the Daimon's heavy heel unfortunately
stricken ones!
So a woman's counsel hath it — if one judge it
learning-worthy.

AIGISTHOS

But to think that these at me the idle tongue should
thus o'erbloom,
And throw out such words — the Daimon's power
experimenting on —
And, of modest knowledge missing, — me, the
ruler, . . .

CHOROS

Ne'er may this befall Argeians — wicked man to
fawn before!

AIGISTHOS

Anyhow, in after days, will I, yes, I, be at thee yet!

CHOROS

Not if hither should the Daimon make Orestes
straightway come!

AIGISTHOS

O, I know, myself, that fugitives on hopes are
pasture-fed!

CHOROS

Do thy deed, get fat, defiling justice, since the
power is thine! 1790

72 THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

AIGISTHOS

Know that thou shalt give me satisfaction for this
folly's sake!

CHOROS

Boast on, bearing thee audacious, like a cock his
females by!

KLUTAIMNESTRA

Have not thou respect for these same idle yelpings!
I and thou
Will arrange it, o'er this household ruling excel-
lently well.

LA SAISIAZ

1878

I

Good, to forgive;
Best, to forget!
Living, we fret;
Dying, we live.
Fretless and free,
Soul, clap thy pinion!
Earth have dominion,
Body, o'er thee!

II


Wander at will,
Day after day,— 10
Wander away,
Wandering still—
Soul that canst soar!
Body may slumber:
Body shall cumber
Soul-flight no more.

III

Waft of soul's wing!
What lies above?
Sunshine and Love,
Skyblue and Spring! 20
Body hides—where?
Ferns of all feather,
Mosses and heather,
Yours be the care!

A. E. S. SEPTEMBER 14, 1877

DARED and done: at last I stand upon the summit,
 Dear and True!
 Singly dared and done; the climbing both of us
 were bound to do.
 Petty feat and yet prodigious; every side my glance
 was bent
 O'er the grandeur and the beauty lavished through
 the whole ascent.
 Ledge by ledge, out broke new marvels, now minute
 and now immense:
 Earth's most exquisite disclosure, heaven's own
 God in evidence!
 And no berry in its hiding, no blue space in its
 outspread,
 Pleaded to escape my footstep, challenged my
 emerging head,
 (As I climbed or paused from climbing, now o'er-
 branched by shrub and tree,
 Now built round by rock and boulder, now at just
 a turn set free, ¹⁰
 Stationed face to face with — Nature? rather with
 Infinitude)
 — No revelation of them all, as singly I my path
 pursued,
 But a bitter touched its sweetness, for the thought
 stung "Even so
 Both of us had loved and wondered just the same,
 five days ago!"
 Five short days, sufficient hardly to entice, from
 out its den
 Splintered in the slab, this pink perfection of the
 cyclamen;
 Scarce enough to heal and coat with amber gum
 the sloe-tree's gash,

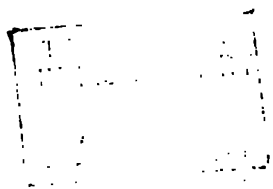


PATH UP THE SAGUÑA

(From a photograph by W. Hall Griffin)

"Ledge by ledge, out broke new marvels, new infinite and new immense:
Earth's most exquisite disclosure, heaven's own God in evidence!"

— LA SAGUÑA.



Bronze the clustered wilding apple, redden ripe
 the mountain-ash:
 Yet of might to place between us — Oh the barrier!
 Yon Profound
 Shrinks beside it, proves a pin-point: barrier this,
 without a bound! 20
 Boundless though it be, I reach you: somehow seem
 to have you here
 — Who are there. Yes, there you dwell now, plain
 the four low walls appear;
 Those are vineyards they enclose from; and the
 little spire which points
 — That's Collonge, henceforth your dwelling. All
 the same, how'er disjoints
 Past from present, no less certain you are here,
 not there: have dared,
 Done the feat of mountain-climbing,—five days
 since, we both prepared
 Daring, doing, arm in arm, if other help should
 haply fail.
 For you asked, as forth we sallied to see sunset
 from the vale,
 “Why not try for once the mountain, — take a fore-
 taste, snatch by stealth
 Sight and sound, some unconsidered fragment of
 the hoarded wealth? 30
 Six weeks at its base, yet never once have we to-
 gether won
 Sight or sound by honest climbing: let us two have
 dared and done
 Just so much of twilight journey as may prove to-
 morrow's jaunt
 Not the only mode of wayfare — wheeled to reach
 the eagle's haunt!”

So, we turned from the low grass-path you were
 pleased to call "your own,"
 Set our faces to the rose-bloom o'er the summit's
 front of stone
 Where Salève obtains, from Jura and the sunken
 sun she hides,
 Due return of blushing "Good Night," rosy as a
 borne-off bride's,
 For his masculine "Good Morrow" when, with
 sunrise still in hold,
 Gay he hails her, and, magnificent, thrilled her black
 length burns to gold. 40
 Up and up we went, how careless — nay, how joy-
 ous! All was new,
 All was strange. "Call progress toilsome? that
 were just insulting you!
 How the trees must temper noontide! Ah, the
 thicket's sudden break!
 What will be the morning glory, when at dusk thus
 gleams the lake?
 Light by light puts forth Geneva: what a land —
 and, of the land,
 Can there be a lovelier station than this spot
 where now we stand?
 Is it late, and wrong to linger? True, to-morrow
 makes amends.
 Toilsome progress? child's play, call it — specially
 when one descends!
 There, the dread descent is over — hardly our ad-
 venture, though!
 Take the vale where late we left it, pace the grass-
 path, 'mine,' you know! 50
 Proud completion of achievement!" And we
 paced it, praising still

That soft tread on velvet verdure as it wound
through hill and hill;
And at very end there met us, coming from Col-
longe, the pair
— All our people of the Chalet — two, enough and
none to spare.
So, we made for home together, and we reached it
as the stars
One by one came lamping — chiefly that prepotency
of Mars —
And your last word was “I owe you this enjoy-
ment!” — met with “Nay:
With yourself its rests to have a month of morrows
like to-day!”
Then the meal, with talk and laughter, and the
news of that rare nook
Yet untroubled by the tourist, touched on by no
travel-book,
All the same — though latent — patent, hybrid birth
of land and sea,
And (our travelled friend assured you) — if such
miracle might be —
Comparable for completeness of both blessings —
all around
Nature, and, inside her circle, safety from world’s
sight and sound —
Comparable to our Saisiaz. “Hold it fast and
guard it well!
Go and see and vouch for certain, then come back
and never tell
Living soul but us; and haply, prove our sky from
cloud as clear,
There may we four meet, praise fortune just as
now, another year!”

Thus you charged him on departure: not without
the final charge

“Mind to-morrow’s early meeting! We must
leave our journey marge 70

Ample for the wayside wonders: there’s the stop-
page at the inn

Three-parts up the mountain, where the hardships
of the track begin;

There ’s the convent worth a visit; but, the triumph
crowning all —

There ’s Salève’s own platform facing glory which
strikes greatness small,

— Blanc, supreme above his earth-brood, needles
red and white and green,

Horns of silver, fangs of crystal set on edge in his
demesne.

So, some three weeks since, we saw them: so, to-
morrow we intend

You shall see them likewise; therefore Good Night
till to-morrow, friend!”

Last, the nothings that extinguish embers of a
vivid day:

“What might be the Marshal’s next move, what
Gambetta’s counter-play?” 80

Till the landing on the staircase saw escape the
latest spark:

“Sleep you well!” “Sleep but as well, you!” —
lazy love quenched, all was dark.

Nothing dark next day at sundawn! Up I rose and
forth I fared:

Took my plunge within the bath-pool, pacified the
watch-dog scared,

Saw proceed the transmutation — Jura’s black to
one gold glow,

Trod your level path that let me drink the morning
 deep and slow,
 Reached the little quarry — ravage recompensed
 by shrub and fern —
 Till the overflowing ardors told me time was for
 return.
 So, return I did, and gayly. But, for once, from
 no far mound
 Waved salute a tall white figure. “Has her sleep
 been so profound? ⁹⁰
 Foresight, rather, prudent saving strength for
 day’s expenditure!
 Ay, the chamber-window’s open: out and on the
 terrace, sure!”

No, the terrace showed no figure, tall, white,
 leaning through the wreaths,
 Tangle-twine of leaf and bloom that intercept the
 air one breathes,
 Interpose between one’s love and Nature’s lov-
 ing, hill and dale
 Down to where the blue lake’s wrinkle marks the
 river’s inrush pale
 — Mary Arve: whereon no vessel but goes sliding
 white and plain,
 Not a steamboat pants from harbor but one hears
 pulsate amain,
 Past the city’s congregated peace of homes and
 pomp of spires
 — Man’s mild protest that there’s something more
 than Nature, man requires, ¹⁰⁰
 And that, useful as is Nature to attract the tourist’s
 foot,
 Quiet slow sure money-making proves the matter’s
 very root, —

Need for body, — while the spirit also needs a
comfort reached

By no help of lake or mountain, but the texts
whence Calvin preached.

“Here’s the veil withdrawn from landscape: up to
Jura and beyond,

All awaits us ranged and ready; yet she violates
the bond,

Neither leans nor looks nor listens: why is this?”

A turn of eye

Took the whole sole answer, gave the undisputed
reason “why!”

This dread way you had your summons! No
premonitory touch,

As you talked and laughed (’t is told me) scarce a
minute ere the clutch 110

Captured you in cold forever. Cold? nay, warm
you were as life

When I raised you, while the others used, in pas-
sionate poor strife,

All the means that seemed to promise any aid, and
all in vain.

Gone you were, and I shall never see that earnest
face again

Grow transparent, grow transfigured with the
sudden light that leapt,

At the first word’s provocation, from the heart-
deeps where it slept.

Therefore, paying piteous duty, what seemed You
have we consigned

Peacefully to — what I think were, of all earth-beds,
to your mind

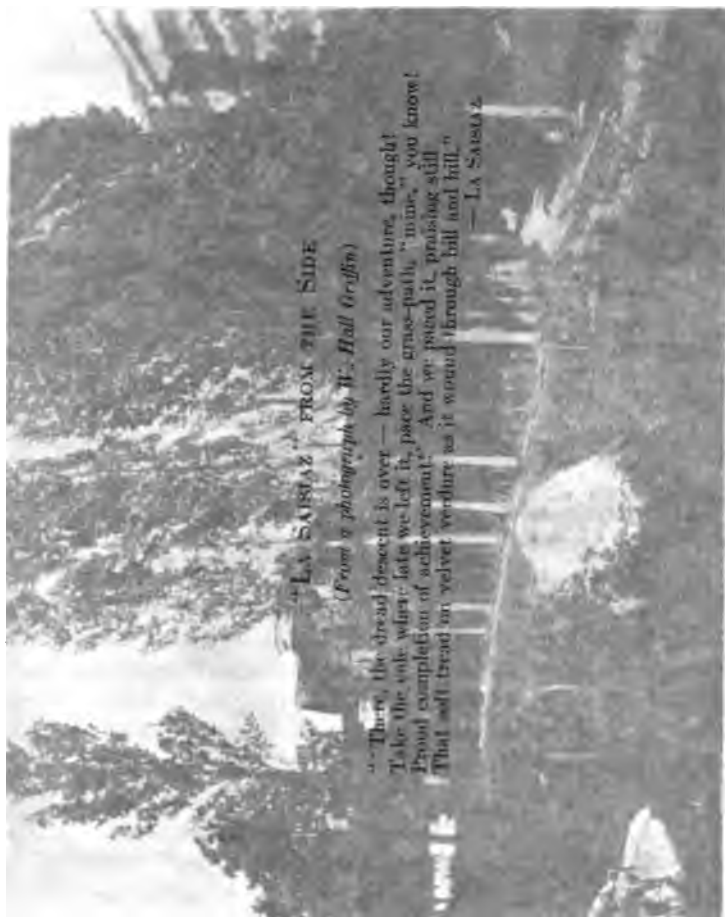
Most the choice for quiet, yonder: low walls stop
the vines’ approach,

"LA SAISIAZ" FROM THE SIDE

(From a photograph by W. Hall Griffin)

"There, the dread descent is over — hardly our adventure, thought!
Take the oak wine: late we left it, pace the grass-path, "mine," you know!
Frool completion of achievement." And we psted it, praising still
That soft tread in velvet verdure as it wound through bill and hill."

— LA SAISIAZ





1

2

Lovingly Salève protects you; village-sports will
 ne'er encroach 120
 On the stranger lady's silence, whom friends bore
 so kind and well
 Thither "just for love's sake," — such their own
 word was: and who can tell?
 You supposed that few or none had known and
 loved you in the world:
 May be! flower that 's full-blown tempts the butter-
 fly, not flower that's furred.
 But more learned sense unlocked you, loosed the
 sheath and let expand
 Bud to bell and outspread flower-shape at the
 least warm touch of hand
 — Maybe, throb of heart, beneath which, —
 quickenning farther than it knew, —
 Treasure oft was disembosomed, scent all strange
 and unguessed hue.
 Disembosomed, re-embosomed, — must one mem-
 ory suffice,
 Prove I knew an Alpine-rose which all beside
 named Edelweiss? 130

Rare thing, red or white, you rest now: two days
 slumbered through; and since
 One day more will see me rid of this same scene
 whereat I wince.
 Tetchy at all sights and sounds and pettish at each
 idle charm
 Proffered me who pace now singly where we two
 went arm in arm, —
 I have turned upon my weakness: asked "And
 what, forsooth, prevents
 That, this latest day allowed me, I fulfil of her
 intentions

One she had the most at heart — that we should
 thus again survey
 From Salève Mont Blanc?" Therefore, — dared
 and done to-day
 Climbing, — here I stand: but you — where?

If a spirit of the place
 Broke the silence, bade me question, promised
 answer, — what disgrace 140
 Did I stipulate "Provided answer suit my hopes,
 not fears!"

Would I shrink to learn my life-time's limit — days,
 weeks, months or years?

Would I shirk assurance on each point whereat I
 can but guess —

"Does the soul survive the body? Is there God's
 self, no or yes?"

If I know my mood, 't were constant — come in
 whatso'er uncouth

Shape it should, nay, formidable — so the answer
 were but truth.

Well, and wherefore shall it daunt me, when 't is
 I myself am tasked,

When, by weakness weakness questioned, weakly
 answers — weakly asked?

Weakness never needs be falseness: truth is truth in
 each degree

— Thunderpealed by God to Nature, whispered
 by my soul to me. 150

Nay, the weakness turns to strength and triumphs
 in a truth beyond:

"Mine is but man's truest answer — how were it
 did God respond?"

I shall no more dare to mimic such response in
 futile speech,
 Pass off human lisp as echo of the sphere-song out
 of reach,
 Than, — because it well may happen yonder,
 where the far snows blanch
 Mute Mont Blanc, that who stands near them sees
 and hears an avalanche, —
 I shall pick a clod and throw, — cry “Such the
 sight and such the sound!
 What though I nor see nor hear them? Others do,
 the proofs abound!”
 Can I make my eye an eagle’s, sharpen ear to
 recognize
 Sound o’er league and league of silence? Can I
 know, who but surmise? 100
 If I dared no self-deception when, a week since, I
 and you
 Walked and talked along the grass-path, passing
 lightly in review
 What seemed hits and what seemed misses in a
 certain fence-play, — strife
 Sundry minds of mark engaged in “On the Soul
 and Future Life,” —
 If I ventured estimating what was come of parried
 thrust,
 Subtle stroke, and, rightly, wrongly, estimating
 could be just
 — Just, though life so seemed abundant in the
 form which moved by mine,
 I might well have played at feigning, fooling, —
 laughed “What need opine
 [Pleasure must succeed to pleasure, else past pleas-
 ure turns to pain,]

And this first life claims a second, else I count its
 good no gain?" 170
 Much less have I heart to palter when the matter
 to decide
 Now becomes "Was ending ending once and always,
 when you died?"
 Did the face, the form I lifted as it lay, reveal the
 loss
 Not alone of life but soul? A tribute to yon flowers
 and moss,
 What of you remains beside? A memory! Easy
 to attest
 "Certainly from out the world that one believes
 who knew her best
 Such was good in her, such fair, which fair and good
 were great perchance
 Had but fortune favored, bidden each shy faculty
 advance;
 After all — who knows another? Only as I know,
 I speak."
 So much of you lives within me while I live my
 year or week. 180
 Then my fellow takes the tale up, not unwilling to
 aver
 Duly in his turn "I knew him best of all, as he
 knew her:
 Such he was, and such he was not, and such other
 might have been
 But that somehow every actor, somewhere in this
 earthly scene,
 Fails." And so both memories dwindle, yours and
 mine together linked,
 Till there is but left for comfort, when the last
 spark proves extinct,

This — that somewhere new existence led by men
 and women new
 Possibly attains perfection coveted by me and
 you;
 While ourselves, the only witness to what work our
 life evolved,
 Only to ourselves proposing problems proper to be
 solved 190
 By ourselves alone, — who working ne'er shall
 know if work bear fruit
 Others reap and garner, heedless how produced by
 stalk and root, —
 We who, darkling, timed the day's birth, — strug-
 gling, testified to peace, —
 Earned, by dint of failure, triumph, — we, creative
 thought, must cease
 In created word, thought's echo, due to impulse
 long since sped!
 Why repine? There 's ever some one lives although
 ourselves be dead!

Well, what signifies repugnance? Truth is truth
 howe'er it strike.
 Fair or foul the lot apportioned life on earth, we
 bear alike.
 Stalwart body idly yoked to stunted spirit, powers,
 that fain
 Else would soar, condemned to grovel, groundlings
 through the fleshly chain, — 200
 Help that hinders, hindrance proved but help dis-
 guised when all too late, —
 Hindrance is the fact acknowledged, howsoe'er
 explained as Fate,
 Fortune, Providence: we bear, own life a burthen
 more or less.

Life thus owned unhappy, is there supplemental
happiness

Possible and probable in life to come? or must we
count

Life a curse and not a blessing, summed-up in its
whole amount,

Help and hindrance, joy and sorrow?

Why should I want courage here?

I will ask and have an answer, — with no favor,
with no fear, —

From myself. How much, how little, do I in-
wardly believe

True that controverted doctrine? Is it fact to
which I cleave, 210

Is it fancy I but cherish, when I take upon my lips
Phrase the solemn Tuscan fashioned, and declare
the soul's eclipse

Not the soul's extinction? take his "I believe and
I declare —

Certain am I — from this life I pass into a better,
there

Where that lady lives of whom enamoured was my
soul" — where this

Other lady, my companion dear and true, she also is?

I have questioned and am answered. Question,
answer presuppose

Two points: that the thing itself which questions,
answers, — *is*, it knows;

As it also knows the thing perceived outside itself,
— a force

Actual ere its own beginning, operative through
its course, 220

Unaffected by its end, — that this thing likewise
needs must be;

Call this — God, then, call that — soul, and both
— the only facts for me.

Prove them facts? that they o'erpass my power of
proving, proves them such:

Fact it is I know I know not something which is
fact as much. ✓

What before caused all the causes, what effect of all
effects

Haply follows, — these are fancy. Ask the rush if
it suspects

Whence and how the stream which floats it had a
rise, and where and how

Falls or flows on still! What answer makes the
rush except that now

Certainly it floats and is, and, no less certain than
itself,

Is the everyway external stream that now through
shoal and shelf 230

Floats it onward, leaves it — may be — wrecked
at last, or lands on shore

There to root again and grow and flourish stable
evermore.

— May be! mere surmise not knowledge: much
conjecture styled belief,

What the rush conceives the stream means through
the voyage blind and brief.

Why, because I doubtless am, shall I as doubtless
be? “Because

God seems good and wise.” Yet under this our
life's apparent laws

Reigns a wrong which, righted once, would give
quite other laws to life.

“He seems potent.” Potent here, then: why are
right and wrong at strife?

Has in life the wrong the better? Happily life ends
so soon!

Right predominates in life? Then why two lives
and double boon? 240

“Anyhow, we want it: wherefore want?” Because,
without the want,

Life, now human, would be brutish: just that hope,
however scant,

Makes the actual life worth leading; take the hope
therein away,

All we have to do is surely not endure another
day.

This life has its hopes for this life, hopes that promise
joy: life done —

Out of all the hopes, how many had complete fulfilment?
none.

“But the soul is not the body:” and the breath is
not the flute;

Both together make the music: either marred and
all is mute.

Truce to such old sad contention whence, according
as we shape

Most of hope or most of fear, we issue in a half-
escape 250

“We believe” is sighed. I take the cup of comfort
proffered thus,

Taste and try each soft ingredient, sweet infusion,
and discuss

What their blending may accomplish for the cure
or doubt, till — slow,

Sorrowful, but how decided! needs must I o’erturn
it — so!

Cause before, effect behind me — blanks! The
midway point I am,

Caused, itself — itself efficient: in that narrow
 space must cram ✓
 All experience — out of which there crowds con-
 jecture manifold,
 But, as knowledge, this comes only — things may
 be as I behold,
 Or may not be, but, without me and above me,
 things there are;
 I myself am what I know not — ignorance which
 proves no bar 260
 To the knowledge that I am, and, since I am, can
 recognize
 What to me is pain and pleasure: this is sure, the
 rest — surmise.
 If my fellows are or are not, what may please them
 and what pain, —
 Mere surmise: my own experience — that is knowl-
 edge, once again!

I have lived, then, done and suffered, loved and
 hated, learnt and taught
 This — there is no reconciling wisdom with a world
 distraught,
 Goodness with triumphant evil, power with failure
 in the aim,
 If — (to my own sense, remember! though none
 other feel the same!) —
 If you bar me from assuming earth to be a pupil's ✓
 place,
 And life, time, — with all their chances, changes,
 — just probation-space, 270
 Mine, for me. But those apparent other mortals —
 theirs, for them?
 Knowledge stands on my experience: all outside its
 narrow hem,

Free surmise may sport and welcome! Pleasures,
 pains affect mankind
 Just as they affect myself? Why, here 's my neigh-
 bor color-blind,
 Eyes like mine to all appearance: "green as grass"
 do I affirm?
 "Red as grass" he contradicts me: which employs
 the proper term?
 Were we two the earth's sole tenants, with no third
 for referee,
 How should I distinguish? Just so, God must
 judge 'twixt man and me.
 To each mortal peradventure earth becomes a new
 machine,
 Pain and pleasure no more tally in our sense than
 red and green; 230
 Still, without what seems such mortal's pleasure,
 pain, my life were lost
 — Life, my whole sole chance to prove — although
 at man's apparent cost —
 What is beauteous and what ugly, right to strive
 for, right to shun,
 Fit to help and fit to hinder, — prove my forces
 every one,
 Good and evil, — learn life's lesson, hate of evil,
 love of good,
 As 't is set me, understand so much as may be
 understood —
 Solve the problem: "From thine apprehended
 scheme of things, deduce
 Praise or blame of its contriver, shown a niggard
 or profuse
 In each good or evil issue! nor miscalculate alike
 Counting one the other in the final balance, which
 to strike, 230

Soul was born and life allotted: ay, the show of
 things unfurled
 For thy summing-up and judgment, — thine, no
 other mortal's world!"

What though fancy scarce may grapple with the
 complex and immense
 — "His own world for every mortal?" Postulate
 omnipotence!

Limit power, and simple grows the complex: shrunk
 to atom size,

That which loomed immense to fancy low before
 my reason lies, —

I survey it and pronounce it work like other work:
 success

Here and there, the workman's glory, — here and
 there, his shame no less,

Failure as conspicuous. Taunt not "Human work
 ape work divine?"

As the power, expect performance! God's be God's
 as mine is mine! 300

God whose power made man and made man's wants,
 and made, to meet those wants,

Heaven and earth which, through the body, prove
 the spirit's ministrants,

Excellently all, — did He lack power or was the
 will in fault

When He let blue heaven be shrouded o'er by
 vapors of the vault,

Gay earth drop her garlands shrivelled at the first
 infecting breath

Of the serpent pains which herald, swarming in,
 the dragon death?

What, no way but this that man may learn and
 lay to heart how rife

Life were with delights would only death allow
 their taste to life?
 Must the rose sigh "Pluck — I perish!" must the
 eve weep "Gaze — I fade!"
 — Every sweet warn "Ware my bitter!" every
 shine bid "Wait my shade"? 310
 Can we love but on condition, that the thing we
 love must die?
 Needs there groan a world in anguish just to teach
 us sympathy —
 Multitudinously wretched that we, wretched too,
 may guess
 What a preferable state were universal happi-
 ness?
 Hardly do I so conceive the outcome of that power
 which went
 To the making of the worm there in yon clod its
 tenement,
 Any more than I distinguish aught of that which,
 wise and good,
 Framed the leaf, its plain of pasture, dropped the
 dew, its fineless food.
 Nay, were fancy fact, were earth and all it holds
 illusion mere,
 Only a machine for teaching love and hate and hope
 and fear 320
 To myself, the sole existence, single truth mid
 falsehood, — well!
 If the harsh throes of the prelude die not off into
 the swell
 Of that perfect piece they sting me to become
 a-strain for, — if
 Roughness of the long rock-clamber lead not to the
 last of cliff,

First of level country where is sward my pilgrim-
foot can prize, —

Plainlier! if this life's conception new life fail to
realize, —

Though earth burst and proved a bubble glassing
hues of hell, one huge

Reflex of the devil's doings — God's work by no
subterfuge —

(So death's kindly touch informed me as it broke
the glamour, gave

Soul and body both release from life's long night-
mare in the grave) 330

Still, — with no more Nature, no more Man as
riddle to be read,

Only my own joys and sorrows now to reckon real
instead, —

I must say — or choke in silence — “Howsoever
came my fate,

Sorrow did and joy did nowise, — life well weighed,
— preponderate.”

By necessity ordained thus! I shall bear as best I
can;

By a cause all-good, all-wise, all-potent? No, as I
am man!

Such were God: and was it goodness that the good
within my range

Or had evil in admixture or grew evil's self by
change?

Wisdom — that becoming wise meant making slow
and sure advance

From a knowledge proved in error to acknowledged
ignorance? 340

Power? 't is just the main assumption reason most
revolts at! power

Unavailing for bestowment on its creature of an
 hour,
 Man, of so much proper action rightly aimed and
 reaching aim,
 So much passion, — no defect there, no excess, but
 still the same, —
 As what constitutes existence, pure perfection
 bright as brief
 For yon worm, man's fellow-creature, on yon
 happier world — its leaf!
 No, as I am man, I mourn the poverty I must
 impute:
 Goodness, wisdom, power, all bounded, each a
 human attribute!

But, O world outspread beneath me! only for my-
 self I speak,
 Nowise dare to play the spokesman for my brothers
 strong and weak, 350
 Full and empty, wise and foolish, good and bad, in
 every age,
 Every clime, I turn my eyes from, as in one or other
 stage
 Of a torture writhe they, Job-like couched on dung
 and crazed with blains
 — Wherefore? whereto? ask the whirlwind what
 the dread voice thence explains!
 I shall "vindicate no way of God's to man," nor
 stand apart,
 "Laugh, be candid!" while I watch it traversing
 the human heart.
 Traversed heart must tell its story uncommented
 on: no less
 Mine results in "Only grant a second life, I ac-
 quiesce

In this present life as failure, count misfortune's
 worst assaults
 Triumph, not defeat, assured that loss so much the
 more exalts 360
 Gain about to be. For at what moment did I so
 advance
 Near to knowledge as when frustrate of escape from
 ignorance?
 Did not beauty prove most precious when its oppo-
 site obtained
 Rule, and truth seem more than ever potent because
 falsehood reigned?
 While for love — Oh how but, losing love, does
 whoso loves succeed
 By the death-pang to the birth-throe — learning
 what is love indeed?
 Only grant my soul may carry high through death
 her cup unspilled,
 Brimming though it be with knowledge, life's loss
 drop by drop distilled,
 I shall boast it mine — the balsam, bless each kindly
 wretch that wrung
 From life's tree its inmost virtue, tapped the root
 whence pleasure sprung, 370
 Barked the bole, and broke the bough, and bruised
 the berry, left all grace
 Ashes in death's stern alembic, loosed elixir in its
 place!

Witness, Dear and True, how little I was 'ware of —
 not your worth
 — That I knew, my heart assures me — but of
 what a shade on earth
 Would the passage from my presence of the tall
 white figure throw

O'er the ways we walked together! Somewhat
 narrow, somewhat slow
 Used to seem the ways, the walking: narrow ways
 are well to tread
 When there's moss beneath the footstep, honey-
 suckle overhead:
 Walking slow to beating bosom surest solace soonest
 gives,
 Liberates the brain o'erloaded — best of all restora-
 tives. 380
 Nay, do I forget the open vast where soon or late
 converged
 Ways though winding? — world-wide heaven-high
 sea where music slept or surged
 As the angel had ascendant, and Beethoven's Ti-
 tan mace
 Smote the immense to storm Mozart would by a
 finger's lifting chase?
 Yes, I knew — but not with knowledge such as
 thrills me while I view
 Yonder precinct which henceforward holds and
 hides the Dear and True.
 Grant me (once again) assurance we shall each
 meet each some day,
 Walk — but with how bold a footstep! on a way —
 but what a way!
 — Worst were best, defeat were triumph, utter
 loss were utmost gain. 389
 Can it be, and must, and will it?

Silence! Out of fact's domain,
 Just surmise prepared to mutter hope, and also
 fear — dispute

Fact's inexorable ruling "Outside fact, surmise be mute!"

Well!

Ay, well and best, if fact's self I may force the answer from!

'Tis surmise I stop the mouth of. Not above in yonder dome

All a rapture with its rose-glow, — not around, where pile and peak

Strainingly await the sun's fall, — not beneath, where crickets creak,

Birds assemble for their bed-time, soft the tree-top swell subsides, —

No, nor yet within my deepest sentient self the knowledge hides.

Aspiration, reminiscence, plausibilities of trust — Now the ready "Man were wronged else," now the rash "and God unjust" — 400

None of these I need. Take thou, my soul, thy solitary stand,

Umpire to the champions Fancy, Reason, as on either hand

Amicable war they wage and play the foe in thy behoof!

Fancy thrust and Reason parry! Thine the prize who stand aloof.

FANCY

I concede the thing refused: henceforth no certainty more plain

Than this mere surmise that after body dies soul lives again.

Two, the only facts acknowledged late, are now increased to three —

God is, and the soul is, and, as certain, after death
shall be.

Put this third to use in life, the time for using fact!

REASON

I do:

Find it promises advantage, coupled with the
other two. 410

Life to come will be improvement on the life that 's
now; destroy

Body's thwartings, there 's no longer screen be-
twixt soul and soul's joy.

Why should we expect new hindrance, novel
tether? In this first

Life, I see the good of evil, why our world began
at worst:

Since time means amelioration, tardily enough
displayed,

Yet a mainly onward moving, never wholly re-
trograde.

We know more though we know little, we grow
stronger though still weak,

Partly see though all too purblind, stammer
though we cannot speak.

There is no such grudge in God as scared the an-
cient Greek, no fresh

Substitute of trap for dragnet, once a breakage in
the mesh. 420

Dragons were, and serpents are, and blind-worms
will be: ne'er emerged

Any new-created python for man's plague since
earth was purged.

Failing proof, then, of invented trouble to replace
the old,

O'er this life the next presents advantage much
and manifold:

Which advantage — in the absence of a fourth
and farther fact

Now conceivably surmised, of harm to follow
from the act —

I pronounce for man's obtaining at this moment.
Why delay?

Is he happy? happiness will change: anticipate the
day!

Is he sad? there's ready refuge: of all sadness
death's prompt cure!

Is he both, in mingled measure? cease a burthen
to endure!

Pains with sorry compensations, pleasures stinted
in the dole,

Power that sinks and pettiness that soars, all
halved and nothing whole,

Idle hopes that lure man onward, forced back by
as idle fears —

What a load he stumbles under through his glad
sad seventy years,

When a touch sets right the turmoil, lifts his
spirit where, flesh-freed,

Knowledge shall be rightly named so, all that
seems be truth indeed!

Grant his forces no accession, nay, no faculty's
increase,

Only let what now exists continue, let him prove
in peace

Power whereof the interrupted unperfected play
enticed

Man through darkness, which to lighten any
spark of hope sufficed, —

What shall then deter his dying out of darkness
into light?

Death itself perchance, brief pain that's pang,
condensed and infinite?

But at worst, he needs must brave it one day,
while, at best, he laughs —

Drops a drop within his chalice, sleep not death
his science quaffs!

Any moment claims more courage when, by cross-
ing cold and gloom,

Manfully man quits discomfort, makes for the
provided room

Where the old friends want their fellow, where
the new acquaintance wait,

Probably for talk assembled, possibly to sup in
state!

I affirm and re-affirm it therefore: only make as
plain

As that man now lives, that, after dying, man will
live again, — 450

Make as plain the absence, also, of a law to con-
travene

Voluntary passage from this life to that by change
of scene, —

And I bid him — at suspicion of first cloud athwart
his sky,

Flower's departure, frost's arrival — never hesi-
tate, but die!

FANCY

Then I double my concession: grant, along with
new life sure,

This same law found lacking now: ordain that,
whether rich or poor

Present life is judged in aught man counts ad-
 vantage — be it hope,
 Be it fear that brightens, blackens most or least
 his horoscope, —
 He, by absolute compulsion such as made him
 live at all,
 Go on living to the fated end of life whate'er be-
 fall. 460
 What though, as on earth he darkling grovels,
 man descry the sphere,
 Next life's — call it, heaven of freedom, close
 above and crystal-clear?
 He shall find — say, hell to punish who in aught
 curtails the term,
 Fain would act the butterfly before he has played
 out the worm.
 God, soul, earth, heaven, hell, — five facts now:
 what is to desiderate?

REASON

Nothing! Henceforth man's existence bows to
 the monition "Wait!
 Take the joys and bear the sorrows — neither
 with extreme concern!
 Living here means nescience simply: 't is next life
 that helps to learn.
 Shut those eyes, next life will open, — stop those
 ears, next life will teach
 Hearing's office, — close those lips, next life will
 give the power of speech! 470
 Or, if action more amuse thee than the passive at-
 titude,
 Bravely bustle through thy being, busy thee for
 ill or good,

Reap this life's success or failure! Soon shall
 things be unperplexed
 And the right and wrong, now tangled, lie un-
 ravelled in the next."

FANCY

Not so fast! Still more concession! not alone do
 I declare
 Life must needs be borne, — I also will that man
 become aware
 Life has worth incalculable, every moment that
 he spends
 So much gain or loss for that next life which on
 this life depends.
 Good, done here, be there rewarded, — evil,
 worked here, there amereed!
 Six facts now, and all established, plain to man
 the last as first. 480

REASON

There was good and evil, then, defined to man by
 this decree?
Was — for at its promulgation both alike have
 ceased to be.
 Prior to this last announcement "Certainly as
 God exists,
 As He made man's soul, as soul is quenchless by
 the deathly mists,
 Yet is, all the same, forbidden premature escape
 from time
 To eternity's provided purer air and brighter
 clime, —
 Just so certainly depends it on the use to which
 man turns

Earth, the good or evil done there, whether after
death he earns

Life eternal, — heaven, the phrase be, or eternal
death, — say, hell.

As his deeds, so proves his portion, doing ill or
doing well!"

490

— Prior to this last announcement, earth was
man's probation-place:

Liberty of doing evil gave his doing good a grace;
Once lay down the law, with Nature's simple

"Such effects succeed

Causes such, and heaven or hell depends upon
man's earthly deed

Just as surely as depends the straight or else the
crooked line

On his making point meet point or with or else
without incline," —

Thenceforth neither good nor evil does man,
doing what he must.

Lay but down that law as stringent "Wouldst
thou live again, be just!"

As this other "Wouldst thou live now, regularly
draw thy breath!

For, suspend the operation, straight law's breach
results in death — "

500

And (provided always, man, addressed this mode,
be sound and sane)

Prompt and absolute obedience, never doubt, will
law obtain!

Tell not me "Look round us! nothing each side
but acknowledged law,

Now styled God's — now, Nature's edict!"
Where's obedience without flaw

Paid to either? What's the adage rife in man's
mouth? Why, "The best

I both see and praise, the worst I follow" —
 which, despite professed
 Seeing, praising, all the same he follows, since he
 disbelieves
 In the heart of him that edict which for truth his
 head receives.
 There's evading and persuading and much mak-
 ing law amends
 Somehow, there's the nice distinction 'twixt fast
 foes and faulty friends, 510
 — Any consequence except inevitable death when
 "Die,
 Whoso breaks our law!" they publish, God and
 Nature equally.
 Law that's kept or broken — subject to man's
 will and pleasure! Whence?
 How comes law to bear eluding? Not because of
 impotence:
 Certain laws exist already which to hear means to
 obey;
 Therefore not without a purpose these man must,
 while those man may
 Keep and, for the keeping, haply gain approval
 and reward.
 Break through this last superstructure, all is
 empty air — no sward
 Firm like my first fact to stand on "God there is,
 and soul there is,"
 And soul's earthly life-allotment: wherein, by hy-
 pothesis, 520
 Soul is bound to pass probation, prove its powers,
 and exercise
 Sense and thought on fact, and then, from fact
 educing fit surmise,

Ask itself, and of itself have solely answer, "Does
the scope
Earth affords of fact to judge by warrant future
fear or hope?"

Thus have we come back full circle: fancy's foot-
steps one by one
Go their round conducting reason to the point
where they begun,
Left where we were left so lately, Dear and True!
When, half a week
Since, we walked and talked and thus I told you,
how suffused a cheek
You had turned me had I sudden brought the
blush into the smile
By some word like "Idly argued! you know better
all the while!" 590
Now, from me — Oh not a blush but, how much
more, a joyous glow,
Laugh triumphant, would it strike did your "Yes,
better I do know"
Break, my warrant for assurance! which assurance
may not be
If, supplanting hope, assurance needs must change
this life to me.
So, I hope — no more than hope, but hope — no
less than hope, because
I can fathom, by no plumb-line sunk in life's
apparent laws,
How I may in any instance fix where change should
meetly fall
Nor involve, by one revisal, abrogation of them
all:
— Which again involves as utter change in life
thus law-released,

Whence the good of goodness vanished when the
ill of evil ceased. 540

Whereas, life and laws apparent re-instated, — all
we know,

All we know not, — o'er our heaven again cloud
closes, until, lo —

Hope the arrowy, just as constant, comes to pierce
its gloom, compelled

By a power and by a purpose which, if no one else
beheld,

I behold in life, so — hope!

Sad summing-up of all to say!
Athanasius contra mundum, why should he hope
more than they?

So are men made notwithstanding, such magnetic
virtue darts

From each head their fancy haloes to their unresist-
ing hearts!

Here I stand, methinks a stone's throw from yon
village I this morn

Traversed for the sake of looking one last look at
its forlorn 550

Tenement's ignoble fortune: through a crevice,
plain its floor

Piled with provender for cattle, while a dung-heap
blocked the door.

In that squalid Bossex, under that obscene red roof,
arose,

Like a fiery flying serpent from its egg, a soul —
Rousseau's.

Turn thence! Is it Diodati joins the glimmer of
the lake?

There I plucked a leaf, one week since, — ivy,
plucked for Byron's sake.

MUSSEAU'S COTTAGE, BESSEY

an photograph by W. Hall Griffin

Bessy, under that obscuric red roof, arose,
A serpent from its egg, a soul—Romantic's—
— LA SALSIE





17

Famed unfortunates! And yet, because of that
 phosphoric fame
 Swathing blackness' self with brightness till pu-
 tridity looked flame,
 All the world was witched: and wherefore? what
 could lie beneath, allure
 Heart of man to let corruption serve man's head
 as cynosure? 500
 Was the magic in the dictum "All that's good is
 gone and past;
 Bad and worse still grows the present, and the
 worst of all comes last:
 Which believe — for I believe it?" So preached
 one his gospel-news;
 While melodious moaned the other "Dying day
 with dolphin-hues!
 Storm, for loveliness and darkness like a woman's
 eye! Ye mounts
 Where I climb to 'scape my fellow, and thou sea
 wherein he counts
 Not one inch of vile dominion! What were your
 especial worth
 Failed ye to enforce the maxim 'Of all objects
 found on earth
 Man is meanest, much too honored when compared
 with — what by odds
 Beats him — any dog: so, let him go a-howling to
 his gods!' 570
 Which believe — for I believe it!" such the com-
 fort man received
 Sadly since perforce he must: for why? the famous
 bard believed!

Fame! Then, give me fame, a moment! As I
 gather at a glance

Human glory after glory vivifying yon expanse,
 Let me grasp them all together, hold on high a
 brandish well
 Beacon-like above the rapt world ready, wheth
 heaven or hell
 Send the dazzling summons earthward, to subn
 itself the same,
 Take on trust the hope or else despair flashed fr
 on face by — Fame!
 Thanks, thou pine-tree of Makistos, wide thy gia
 torch I wave!
 Know ye whence I plucked the pillar, late with sl
 for architrave?
 This the trunk, the central solid Knowledge, ki
 dled core, began
 Tugging earth-deeps, trying heaven-heights, root
 yonder at Lausanne.
 This which flits and spits, the aspic, — sparkles
 and out the boughs
 Now, and now condensed, the python, coil
 round and round allows
 Scarce the bole its due effulgence, dulled by fla
 on flake of Wit —
 Laughter so bejewels Learning, — what but Fern
 nourished it?
 Nay, nor fear — since every resin feeds the flame
 that I dispense
 With yon Bossex terebinth-tree's all-expl
 Eloquence:
 No, be sure! nor, any more than thy resplendenc
 Jean-Jacques,
 Dare I want thine, Diodati! What though mo
 keys and macaques
 Gibber "Byron"? Byron's ivy rears a branch t
 yond the crew,

Green forever, no deciduous trash macaques and
 monkeys chew!
 As Rousseau, then, eloquent, as Byron prime in
 poet's power, —
 Detonations, fulgurations, smiles — the rainbow,
 tears — the shower, —
 Lo, I lift the coruscating marvel — Fame! and,
 famed, declare
 — Learned for the nonce as Gibbon, witty as wit's
 self Voltaire . . .
 O the sorriest of conclusions to whatever man of
 sense
 Mid the millions stands the unit, takes no flare for
 evidence!
 Yet the millions have their portion, live their calm
 or troublous day,
 Find significance in fireworks: so, by help of mine,
 they may 000
 Confidently lay to heart and lock in head their life
 long — this:
 "He there with the brand flamboyant, broad o'er
 night's forlorn abyss,
 Crowned by prose and verse; and wielding, with
 Wit's bauble, Learning's rod / . . .
 Well? Why, he at least believed in Soul, was very
 sure of God."

So the poor smile played, that evening: pallid smile
 long since extinct
 Here in London's mid-November! Not so loosely
 thoughts were linked,
 Six weeks since as I, descending in the sunset from
 Salève,
 Found the chain, I seemed to forge there, flawless
 till it reached your grave, —

Not so filmy was the texture, but I bore it in my
breast
Safe thus far. And since I found a something in me
would not rest 610
Till I, link by link, unravelled any tangle of the
chain,
— Here it lies, for much or little! I have lived all
o'er again
That last pregnant hour: I saved it, just as I could
save a root
Disinterred for re-interment when the time best
helps to shoot.
Life is stocked with germs of torpid life; but may I
never wake
Those of mine whose resurrection could not be
without earthquake!
Rest all such, unraised forever! Be this, sad yet
sweet, the sole
Memory evoked from slumber! Least part this:
then what the whole?

DRAMATIC IDYLS

FIRST SERIES

1879

MARTIN RELPH

*My grandfather says he remembers he saw, when a
youngster long ago,
On a bright May day, a strange old man, with a beard
as white as snow,
Stand on the hill outside our town like a monument of
woe,
And, striking his bare bald head the while, sob out the
reason — so!*

If I last as long as Methuselah I shall never forgive
myself:
But—God forgive me, that I pray, unhappy Martin
Relph,
As coward, coward I call him — him, yes, him!
Away from me!
Get you behind the man I am now, you man that I
used to be!

What can have sewed my mouth up, set me a-stare,
all eyes, no tongue?
People have urged “You visit a scare too hard on
a lad so young!”¹⁰
You were taken aback, poor boy,” they urge, “no
time to regain your wits:
Besides it had maybe cost you life.” Ay, there is
the cap which fits!

So, cap me, the coward, — thus! No fear! A cuff
 on the brow does good:
 The feel of it hinders a worm inside which bores at
 the brain for food.
 See now, there certainly seems excuse: for a moment,
 I trust, dear friends,
 The fault was but folly, no fault of mine, or if mine,
 I have made amends!

For, every day that is first of May, on the hill-top,
 here stand I,
 Martin Relph, and I strike my brow, and publish
 the reason why,
 When there gathers a crowd to mock the fool. No
 fool, friends, since the bite
 Of a worm inside is worse to bear: pray God I have
 balked him quite! 20

I'll tell you. Certainly much excuse! It came of
 the way they cooped
 Us peasantry up in a ring just here, close huddling
 because tight-hooped
 By the red-coats round us villagers all: they meant
 we should see the sight
 And take the example, — see, not speak, for speech
 was the Captain's right.

“You clowns on the slope, beware!” cried he:
 “This woman about to die
 Gives by her fate fair warning to such acquaintance
 as play the spy.
 Henceforth who meddle with matters of state above
 them perhaps will learn
 That peasants should stick to their plough-tail,
 leave to the King the King's concern.

“Here ’s a quarrel that sets the land on fire, between
King George and his foes:

What call has a man of your kind — much less, a
woman — to interpose? 30

Yet you needs must be meddling, folk like you, not
foes — so much the worse!

The many and loyal should keep themselves un-
mixed with the few perverse.

“Is the counsel hard to follow? I gave it you
plainly a month ago,

And where was the good? The rebels have learned
just all that they need to know.

Not a month since in we quietly marched: a week,
and they had the news,

From a list complete of our rank and file to a note
of our caps and shoes.

“All about all we did and all we were doing and
like to do!

Only, I catch a letter by luck, and capture who wrote
it, too.

Some of you men look black enough, but the milk-
white face demure

Betokens the finger foul with ink: ’t is a woman
who writes, be sure! 40

“Is it ‘Dearie, how much I miss your mouth!’ —
good natural stuff, she pens?

Some sprinkle of that, for a blind, of course: with
talk about cocks and hens,

How ‘robin has built on the apple-tree, and our
creeper which came to grief

Through the frost, we feared, is twining afresh
round casement in famous leaf.’

“But all for a blind! She soon glides frank into
 ‘Horrid the place is grown
 With Officers here and Privates there, no nook we
 may call our own:
 And Farmer Giles has a tribe to house, and lodging
 will be to seek
 For the second Company sure to come (’t is whis-
 pered) on Monday week.’

“And so to the end of the chapter! There! The
 murder, you see, was out:
 Easy to guess how the change of mind in the rebels
 was brought about! ⁵⁰
 Safe in the trap would they now lie snug, had
 treachery made no sign:
 But treachery meets a just reward, no matter if
 fools malign!

“That traitors had played us false, was proved —
 sent news which fell so pat:
 And the murder was out— this letter of love, the
 sender of this sent that!
 ’T is an ugly job, though, all the same — a hateful,
 to have to deal
 With a case of the kind, when a woman ’s in fault:
 we soldiers need nerves of steel!

“So, I gave her a chance, despatched post-haste a
 message to Vincent Parkes
 Whom she wrote to; easy to find he was, since one
 of the King’s own clerks,
 Ay, kept by the King’s own gold in the town close
 by where the rebels camp:
 A sort of a lawyer, just the man to betray our sort
 — the scamp! 60

"If her writing is simple and honest and only the
 lover-like stuff it looks,
 And if you yourself are a loyalist, nor down in the
 rebels' books,
 Come quick,' said, 'and in person prove you are
 each of you clear of crime,
 Or martial law must take its course: this day next
 week's the time!'

"Next week is now: does he come? Not he! Clean
 gone, our clerk, in a trice!
 He has left his sweetheart here in the lurch: no need
 of a warning twice!
 His own neck free, but his partner's fast in the
 noose still, here she stands
 To pay for her fault. 'T is an ugly job: but soldiers
 obey commands.

"And hearken wherefore I make a speech! Should
 any acquaintance share
 The folly that led to the fault that is now to be
 punished, let fools beware! 70
 Look black, if you please, but keep hands white:
 and, above all else, keep wives —
 Or sweethearts or what they may be — from ink!
 Not a word now, on your lives!"

Black? but the Pit's own pitch was white to the
 Captain's face — the brute
 With the bloated cheeks and the bulgy nose and
 the bloodshot eyes to suit!
 He was muddled with wine, they say: more like,
 he was out of his wits with fear;
 He had but a handful of men, that's true, — a riot
 might cost him dear.

And all that time stood Rosamund Page, with
 pinioned arms and face
 Bandaged about, on the turf marked out for the
 party's firing-place.
 I hope she was wholly with God: I hope 't was His
 angel stretched a hand
 To steady her so, like the shape of stone you see in
 our church-aisle stand. 80

I hope there was no vain fancy pierced the bandage
 to vex her eyes,
 No face within which she missed without, no ques-
 tions and no replies —
 "Why did you leave me to die?" — "Because . . ."
 Oh, fiends, too soon you grin
 At merely a moment of hell, like that — such
 heaven as hell ended in!

Let mine end too! He gave the word, up went the
 guns in a line.
 Those heaped on the hill were blind as dumb, —
 for, of all eyes, only mine
 Looked over the heads of the foremost rank. Some
 fell on their knees in prayer,
 Some sank to the earth, but all shut eyes, with a
 sole exception there.

That was myself, who had stolen up last, had
 sidled behind the group:
 I am highest of all on the hill-top, there stand fixed
 while the others stoop! 90
 From head to foot in a serpent's twine am I tight-
 ened: *I touch ground?*
 No more than a gibbet's rigid corpse which the
 fetters rust around?

Can I speak, can I breathe, can I burst — aught
else but see, see, only see?

And see I do — for there comes in sight — a man,
it sure must be! —

Who staggeringly, stumblingly rises, falls, rises, at
random flings his weight

On and on, anyhow onward — a man that's mad
he arrives too late!

Else why does he wave a something white high-
flourished above his head?

Why does not he call, cry — curse the fool! — why
throw up his arms instead?

O take this fist in your own face, fool! Why does
not yourself shout "Stay!

Here's a man comes rushing, might and main, with
something he's mad to say"? 100

And a minute, only a moment, to have hell-fire boil
up in your brain,

And ere you can judge things right, choose heaven,
— time's over, repentance vain!

They level: a volley, a smoke and the clearing of
smoke: I see no more

Of the man smoke hid, nor his frantic arms, nor
the something white he bore.

But stretched on the field, some half-mile off, is an
object. Surely dumb,

Deaf, blind were we struck, that nobody heard, not
one of us saw him come!

Has he fainted through fright? One may well
believe! What is it he holds so fast?

Turn him over, examine the face! Heyday! What,
Vincent Parkes at last?

Dead! dead as she, by the self-same shot: one bullet
 has ended both,
 Her in the body and him in the soul. They laugh
 at our plighted troth. 110
 "Till death us do part?" Till death us do join
 past parting — that sounds like
 Betrothal indeed! O Vincent Parkes, what need
 has my fist to strike?

I helped you: thus were you dead and wed: one
 bound, and your soul reached hers!
 There is clenched in your hand the thing, signed,
 sealed, the paper which plain avers
 She is innocent, innocent, plain as print, with the
 King's Arms broad engraved:
 No one can hear, but if any one high on the hill can
 see, she's saved!

And torn his garb and bloody his lips with heart-
 break — plain it grew
 How the week's delay had been brought about:
 each guess at the end proved true.
 It was hard to get at the folk in power: such waste
 of time! and then
 Such pleading and praying, with, all the while, his
 lamb in the lions' den! 120

And at length when he wrung their pardon out, no
 end to the stupid forms —
 The license and leave: I make no doubt — what
 wonder if passion warms
 The pulse in a man if you play with his heart? —
 he was something hasty in speech;
 Anyhow, none would quicken the work: he had to
 beseech, beseech!

And the thing once signed, sealed, safe in his grasp,
 — what followed but fresh delays?
 For the floods were out, he was forced to take such
 a roundabout of ways!
 And 't was "Halt there!" at every turn of the
 road, since he had to cross the thick
 Of the red-coats: what they did care for him and his
 "Quick, for God's sake, quick!"

Horse? but he had one: had it how long? till the
 first knave smirked "You brag
 Yourself a friend of the King's? then lend to a
 King's friend here your nag!" 130
 Money to buy another? Why, piece by piece they
 plundered him still,
 With their "Wait you must, — no help: if aught
 can help you, a guinea will!"

And a borough there was — I forget the name —
 whose Mayor must have the bench
 Of Justices ranged to clear a doubt: for "Vincent,"
 thinks he, sounds French!
 It well may have driven him daft, God knows! all
 man can certainly know
 Is — rushing and falling and rising, at last he
 arrived in a horror — so!

When a word, cry, gasp, would have rescued both!
 Ay bite me! The worm begins
 At his work once more. Had cowardice proved —
 that only — my sin of sins!
 Friends, look you here! Suppose . . . suppose
 . . . But mad I am, needs must be!
 Judas the Damned would never have dared such a
 sin as I dream! For, see! 140

Suppose I had sneakingly loved her myself, my
 wretched self, and dreamed
 In the heart of me "She were better dead than
 happy and his!" — while gleamed
 A light from hell as I spied the pair in a perfectest
 embrace,
 He the saviour and she the saved, — bliss born of
 the very murder-place!

No! Say I was scared, friends! Call me fool and
 coward, but nothing worse!
 Jeer at the fool and gibe at the coward! 'T was
 ever the coward's curse
 That fear breeds fancies in such: such take their
 shadow for substance still,
 — A fiend at their back. I liked poor Parkes, —
 loved Vincent, if you will!

And her — why, I said "Good morrow" to her,
 "Good even," and nothing more:
 The neighborly way! She was just to me as fifty
 had been before. 150
 So, coward it is and coward shall be! There's a
 friend, now! Thanks! A drink
 Of water I wanted: and now I can walk, get home
 by myself, I think.

PHEIDIPPIDES

Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν

FIRST I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!
 Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes, honor
 to all!
 Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-
 equal in praise

— Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the
ægis and spear!

Also, y of the bow and the buskin, praised be your
peer,

Now, henceforth and forever, — O latest to whom
I upraise

Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave
pasture and flock!

Present to help, potent to save, Pan — patron I
call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I
return!

See, 't is myself here standing alive, no spectre that
speaks! 10

Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me,
Athens and you,

“Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta
for aid!

Persia has come, we are here, where is She?” Your
command I obeyed,

Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire
runs through,

Was the space between city and city: two days, two
nights did I burn

Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up
peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for
“Persia has come!

Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water
and earth;

Razed to the ground is Eretria — but Athens, shall
Athens sink,

Drop into dust and die — the flower of Hellas
utterly die, 20

Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the
stupid, the stander-by?

Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you
stretch o'er destruction's brink?

How, — when? No care for my limbs! — there's
lightning in all and some —

Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it
birth!"

O my Athens — Sparta love thee? Did Sparta
respond?

Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mis-
trust,

Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glitter of
gratified hate!

Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for
excuses. I stood

Quivering, — the limbs of me fretting as fire frets,
an inch from dry wood:

"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they
debate?"

Thunder, thou Zeus! Athené, are Spartans a
quarry beyond

Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang
them 'Ye must'!"

No bolt launched from Olumpos! So, their answer
at last!

"Has Persia come, — does Athens ask aid, — may
Sparta befriend?

Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty the
issue at stake!

Count we no time lost time which lags through
respect to the Gods!

Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever
the odds

In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is
 unable to take
 Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she
 rounds to it fast:
 Athens must wait, patient as we — who judgment
 suspend." 40

Athens, — except for that sparkle, — thy name, I
 had mouldered to ash!
 That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and
 away was I back,
 — Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the
 false and the vile!
 Yet "O Gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock
 and plain,
 Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past
 them again,
 "Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we
 paid you erewhile?
 Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation!
 Too rash
 Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so
 slack!

"Oak and olive and bay, — I bid you cease to
 enwreathe
 Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Per-
 sian's foot, 50
 You that, our patrons were pledged, should never
 adorn a slave!
 Rather I hail thee, Parnes, — trust to thy wild
 waste tract!
 Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter
 if slacked

My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and
to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure? at least I can
breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from
the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden,
a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking
the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the
fissure across:
"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night
in the fosse?
Athens to aid? Though the diver were through
Erebus, thus I obey —
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise!
No bridge
Better!" — when — ha! what was it I came on, of
wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he — majestic
Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned
his hoof:
All the great God was good in the eyes grave-kindly
— the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's
awe,
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand
I saw.
"Halt, Pheidippides!" — halt I did, my brain of a
whirl:

"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he
gracious began:

"How is it, — Athens, only in Hellas, holds me
aloof?

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no
feast!

Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more
helpful of old?

Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan,
trust me!

Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn,
have faith

In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens,
'The Goat-God saith:

When Persia — so much as strews not the soil — is
cast in the sea,

Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with
your most and least,

Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with
the free and the bold!' 80

"Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the place,
be the pledge!'"

(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I
bear

— Fennel — I grasped it a-tremble with dew —
whatever it bode)

"While, as for thee . . ." But enough! He was
gone. If I ran hitherto —

Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer,
but flew.

Parnes to Athens — earth no more, the air was
my road:

Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on
 the razor's edge!
 Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon
 rare!

Then spoke Miltiades. "And thee, best runner of
 Greece,
 Whose limbs did duty indeed, — what gift I
 promised thyself?
 Tell it us straightway, — Athens the mother de-
 mands of her son!"
 Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting a
 length
 His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered
 the rest of his strength
 Into the utterance — "Pan spoke thus: 'For what
 thou hast done
 Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed
 thee release
 From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise of
 in self!'

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most
 to my mind!
 Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever the
 fennel may grow, —
 Pound — Pan helping us — Persia to dust, and
 under the deep,
 Whelm her away forever; and then, — no Athenian
 to save, — 10
 Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the
 brave, —
 Hie to my house and home: and, when my children
 shall creep

Close to my knees, — recount how the God was
 awful yet kind,
 Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding
 him — so!"

Unforseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon
 day:
 So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akro-
 polis!
 Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the mead is thy
 due!
 'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung
 down his shield,
 Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the
 Fennel-field
 And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire
 runs through, 110
 Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like
 wine through clay,
 Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the
 bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word
 of salute
 Is still "Rejoice!" — his word which brought
 rejoicing indeed.
 So is Pheidippides happy forever, — the noble
 strong man
 Who could race like a God, bear the face of a God,
 whom a God loved so well;
 He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and
 was suffered to tell
 Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as
 he began,

So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be
mute:

“Athens is saved!” — Pheidippides dies in the
shout for his deed. 120

HALBERT AND HOB

HERE is a thing that happened. Like wild beasts
whelped, for den,

In a wild part of North England, there lived once
two wild men

Inhabiting one homestead, neither a hovel nor hut,
Time out of mind their birthright: father and son,
these — but —

Such a son, such a father! Most wildness by degree
Softens away: yet, last of their line, the wildest and
worst were these.

Criminals, then? Why, no: they did not murder
and rob;

But, give them a word, they returned a blow — old
Halbert as young Hob:

Harsh and fierce of word, rough and savage of deed,
Hated or feared the more — who knows? — the
genuine wild-beast breed. 10

Thus were they found by the few sparse folk of the
country-side;

But how fared each with other? E'en beasts couch,
hide by hide,

In a growling, grudging agreement: so, father and
son aye curled

The closelier up in their den because the last of
their kind in the world.

Still, beast irks beast on occasion. One Christ-
mas night of snow,
Came father and son to words — such words!
more cruel because the blow
To crown each word was wanting, while taunt
matched gibe, and curse
Competed with oath in wager, like pastime in
hell, — nay, worse:
For pastime turned to earnest, as up there sprang
at last
The son at the throat of the father, seized him
and held him fast. 20

“Out of this house you go!” — (there followed a
hideous oath) —
“This oven where now we bake, too hot to hold
us both!
If there’s snow outside, there’s coolness: out
with you, bide a spell
In the drift and save the sexton the charge of a
parish shell!”

Now, the old trunk was tough, was solid as stump
of oak
Untouched at the core by a thousand years: much
less had its seventy broke
One whipcord nerve in the muscly mass from neck
to shoulder-blade
Of the mountainous man, whereon his child’s
rash hand like a feather weighed.

Nevertheless at once did the mammoth shut his
eyes,
Drop chin to breast, drop hands to sides, stand
stiffened — arms and thighs 30

All of a piece — struck mute, much as a sentry
stands,
Patient to take the enemy's fire: his captain so
commands.

Whereat the son's wrath flew to fury at such
sheer scorn
Of his puny strength by the giant eld thus acting
the babe new-born:
And "Neither will this turn serve!" yelled he.
"Out with you! Trundle, log!
If you cannot tramp and trudge like a man, try
all-fours like a dog!"

Still the old man stood mute. So, logwise, —
down to floor
Pulled from his fireside place, dragged on from
hearth to door, —
Was he pushed, a very log, staircase along, until
A certain turn in the steps was reached, a yard
from the house-door-sill. 40

Then the father opened eyes — each spark of
their rage extinct, —
Temples, late black, dead-blanchèd, — right-hand
with left-hand linked, —
He faced his son submissive; when slow the ac-
cents came,
They were strangely mild though his son's rash
hand on his neck lay all the same.

"Hob, on just such a night of a Christmas long
ago,
For such a cause, with such a gesture, did I drag —
so —

My father down thus far: but, softening here, I
heard
A voice in my heart, and stopped: you wait for
an outer word.

“For your own sake, not mine, soften you too!
Untrod
Leave this last step we reach, nor brave the fin-
ger of God! ⁵⁰
I dared not pass its lifting: I did well. I nor
blame
Nor praise you. I stopped here: and, Hob, do
you the same!”

Straightway the son relaxed his hold of the
father's throat.
They mounted, side by side, to the room again:
no note
Took either of each, no sign made each to either:
last
As first, in absolute silence, their Christmas-night
they passed.

At dawn, the father sate on, dead, in the self-
same place,
With an outburst blackening still the old bad
fighting-face:
But the son crouched all a-tremble like any lamb
new-yeaned.

When he went to the burial, some one's staff he
borrowed — tottered and leaned. ⁶⁰
But his lips were loose, not locked, — kept mut-
tering, mumbling. “There!

At his cursing and swearing!" the youngsters
cried: but the elders thought "In prayer."
A boy threw stones: he picked them up and stored
them in his vest.

So tottered, muttered, mumbled he, till he died,
perhaps found rest.
"Is there a reason in nature for these hard hearts?"
O Lear,
That a reason out of nature must turn them soft,
seems clear!

IVÀN IVÀNOVITCH

"THEY tell me, your carpenters," quoth I to my
friend the Russ,
"Make a simple hatchet serve as a tool-box serves
with us.
Arm but each man with his axe, 't is a hammer
and saw and plane
And chisel, and — what know I else? We should
imitate in vain
The mastery wherewithal, by a flourish of just
the adze,
He cleaves, clamps, dovetails in, — no need of
our nails and brads, —
The manageable pine: 't is said he could shave
himself
With the axe, — so all adroit, now a giant and
now an elf,
Does he work and play at once!"
Quoth my friend the Russ to me,
"Ay, that and more beside on occasion! It scarce
may be

You never heard tell a tale told children, time out
of mind,
By father and mother and nurse, for a moral
that's behind,
Which children quickly seize. If the incident
happened at all,
We place it in Peter's time when hearts were
great not small,
Germanized, Frenchified. I wager 't is old to you
As the story of Adam and Eve, and possibly
quite as true."

In the deep of our land, 't is said, a village from
out the woods
Emerged on the great main-road 'twixt two great
solitudes.
Through forestry right and left, black verst and
verst of pine,
From village to village runs the road's long wide
bare line. 20
Clearance and clearance break the else-uncon-
quered growth
Of pine and all that breeds and broods there,
leaving loth
Man's inch of masterdom, — spot of life, spirit of
fire, —
To star the dark and dread, lest right and rule
expire
Throughout the monstrous wild, a-hungered to
resume
Its ancient sway, suck back the world into its
womb:
Defrauded by man's craft which clove from North
to South

This highway broad and straight e'en from the
 Neva's mouth
 To Moscow's gates of gold. So, spot of life and
 spirt
 Of fire aforesaid, burn, each village death-begirt so
 By wall and wall of pine — unprobed undreamed
 abyss.

Early one winter morn, in such a village as this,
 Snow-whitened everywhere except the middle road
 Ice-roughed by track of sledge, there worked by
 his abode
 Ivàn Ivànovitch, the carpenter, employed
 On a huge shipmast trunk; his axe now trimmed
 and toyed
 With branch and twig, and now some chop athwart
 the bole
 Changed bole to billets, bared at once the sap and
 soul.
 About him, watched the work his neighbors
 sheepskin-clad;
 Each bearded mouth puffed steam, each gray eye
 twinkled glad 40
 To see the sturdy arm which, never stopping
 play,
 Proved strong man's blood still boils, freeze win-
 ter as he may.
 Sudden, a burst of bells. Out of the road, on
 edge
 Of the hamlet — horse's hoofs galloping. "How,
 a sledge?
 What 's here?" cried all as — in, up to the open
 space,
 Workyard and market-ground, folk's common
 meeting-place, —

Stumbled on, till he fell, in one last bound for
 life,
 A horse: and, at his heels, a sledge held —
 “Dmitri’s wife!
 Back without Dmitri too! and children — where
 are they? 49
 Only a frozen corpse!”

They drew it forth: then — “Nay,
 Not dead, though like to die! Gone hence a
 month ago:
 Home again, this rough jaunt — alone through
 night and snow —
 What can the cause be? Hark — Droug, old
 horse, how he groans:
 His day’s done! Chafe away, keep chafing, for
 she moans:
 She’s coming to! Give here: see, mother-kin,
 your friends!
 Cheer up, all safe at home! Warm inside makes
 amends
 For outside cold, — sup quick! Don’t look as we
 were bears!
 What is it startles you? What strange adventure
 stares
 Up at us in your face? You know friends —
 which is which?
 I’m Væssili, he’s Sergéi, Ivàn Ivànovitch . . .” ∞

At the word, the woman’s eyes, slow-wandering
 till they neared
 The blue eyes o’er the bush of honey-colored
 beard,
 Took in full light and sense and — torn to rags,
 some dream

Which hid the naked truth — O loud and long
 the scream
 She gave, as if all power of voice within her
 throat
 Poured itself wild away to waste in one dread
 note!
 Then followed gasps and sobs, and then the steady
 flow
 Of kindly tears: the brain was saved, a man
 might know.
 Down fell her face upon the good friend's prop-
 ping knee;
 His broad hands smoothed her head, as fain to
 brush it free 70
 From fancies, swarms that stung like bees un-
 hived. He soothed —
 "Loukèria, Louÿcha!" — still he, fondling, smoothed
 and smoothed.
 At last her lips formed speech.

"Ivàn, dear — you indeed!
 You, just the same dear you! While I . . . O
 intercede,
 Sweet Mother, with thy Son Almighty — let his
 might
 Bring yesterday once more, undo all done last
 night!
 But this time yesterday, Ivàn, I sat like you,
 A child on either knee, and, dearer than the
 two,
 A babe inside my arms, close to my heart —
 that's lost
 In morsels o'er the snow! Father, Son, Holy
 Ghost, 80
 Cannot you bring again my blessed yesterday?"

When no more tears would flow, she told her tale:
this way.

“Maybe, a month ago, — was it not? — news
came here,
They wanted, deeper down, good workmen fit
to rear
A church and roof it in. ‘We’ll go,’ my husband
said:
‘None understands like me to melt and mould
their lead.’
So, friends here helped us off — Ivàn, dear, you
the first!
How gay we jingled forth, all five — (my heart
will burst) —
While Dmitri shook the reins, urged Droug upon
his track!

“Well, soon the month ran out, we just were
coming back,
When yesterday — behold, the village was on fire! ⁹⁰
Fire ran from house to house. What help, as,
nigh and nigher,
The flames came furious? ‘Haste,’ cried Dmitri,
‘men must do
The little good man may: to sledge and in with
you,
You and our three! We check the fire by laying
flat
Each building in its path, — I needs must stay
for that, —
But you . . . no time for talk! Wrap round you
every rug,
Cover the couple close, — you’ll have the babe
to hug.

No care to guide old Droug, he knows his way, by
guess,

Once start him on the road: but chirrup, none
the less! 100

The snow lies glib as glass and hard as steel, and
soon

You 'll have rise, fine and full, a marvel of a moon.
Hold straight up, all the same, this lighted twist of
pitch!

Once home and with our friend Ivàn Ivànovitch,
All 's safe: I have my pay in pouch, all 's right with
me,

So I but find as safe you and our precious three!
Off, Droug!' — because the flames had reached us,
and the men

Shouted 'But lend a hand, Dmitri—as good as ten!'

"So, in we bundled — I, and those God gave me
once;

Old Droug, that 's stiff at first, seemed youthful for
the nonce: 110

He understood the case, galloping straight ahead.
Out came the moon: my twist soon dwindled,
feebly red

In that unnatural day — yes, daylight, bred be-
tween

Moon-light and snow-light, lamped those grotto-
depths which screen

Such devils from God's eye. Ah, pines, how straight
you grow

Nor bend one pitying branch, true breed of brutal
snow!

Some undergrowth had served to keep the devils
blind

While we escaped outside their border!

"Was that — wind?
 Anyhow, Droug starts, stops, back go his ears, he
 snuffs,
 Snorts, — never such a snort! then plunges, knows
 the sough 's 120
 Only the wind: yet, no — our breath goes up too
 straight!
 Still the low sound, — less low, loud, louder, at a
 rate
 There 's no mistaking more! Shall I lean out —
 look — learn
 The truth whatever it be? Pad, pad! At last, I
 turn —

"T is the regular pad of the wolves in pursuit of
 the life in the sledge!
 An army they are: close-packed they press like the
 thrust of a wedge:
 They increase as they hunt: for I see, through the
 pine-trunks ranged each side,
 Slip forth new fiend and fiend, make wider and still
 more wide
 The four-footed steady advance. The foremost —
 none may pass:
 They are elders and lead the line, eye and eye —
 green-glowing brass! 130
 But a long way distant still. Droug, save us! He
 does his best:
 Yet they gain on us, gain, till they reach, — one
 reaches . . . How utter the rest?
 O that Satan-faced first of the band! How he lolls
 out the length of his tongue,
 How he laughs and lets gleam his white teeth! He
 is on me, his paws pry among

The wraps and the rugs! O my pair, my twin-
 pigeons, lie still and seem dead!
 Stepàn, he shall never have you for a meal, —
 here's your mother instead!
 No, he will not be counselled — must cry, poor
 Stiòpka, so foolish! though first
 Of my boy-brood, he was not the best: nay, neigh-
 bors have called him the worst:
 He was puny, an undersized slip, — a darling to me,
 all the same!
 But little there was to be praised in the boy, and a
 plenty to blame. 140
 I loved him with heart and soul, yes — but, deal
 him a blow for a fault,
 He would sulk for whole days. 'Foolish boy! lie
 still or the villain will vault,
 Will snatch you from over my head!' No use! he
 cries, screams, — who can hold
 Fast a boy in a frenzy of fear! It follows — as I
 foretold!
 The Satan-face snatched and snapped: I tugged, I
 tore — and then
 His brother too needs must shriek! If one must go,
 't is men
 The Tsar needs, so we hear, not ailing boys! Per-
 haps
 My hands relaxed their grasp, got tangled in the
 wraps:
 God, he was gone! I looked: there tumbled the
 cursed crew,
 Each fighting for a share: too busy to pursue! 150
 That's so far gain at least: Droug, gallop another
 verst
 Or two, or three — God sends we beat them, arrive
 the first!

A mother who boasts two boys was ever accounted
 rich:
 Some have not a boy: some have, but lose him, —
 God knows which
 Is worse: how pitiful to see your weakling pine
 And pale and pass away! Strong brats, this pair of
 mine!

“O misery! for while I settle to what near seems
 Content, I am 'ware again of the tramp, and again
 there gleams —
 Point and point — the line, eyes, levelled green
 brassy fire!
 So soon is resumed your chase? Will nothing ap-
 pease, naught tire 100
 The furies? And yet I think — I am certain the
 race is slack,
 And the numbers are nothing like. Not a quarter
 of the pack!
 Feasters and those full-fed are staying behind . . .
 Ah why?
 We'll sorrow for that too soon! Now, — gallop,
 reach home, and die,
 Nor ever again leave house, to trust our life in the
 trap
 For life — we call a sledge! Teriòscha! in my
 lap,
 Yes, I'll lie down upon you, tight-tie you with the
 strings
 Here — of my heart! No fear, this time, your
 mother flings . . .
 Flings? I flung? Never! but think! — a woman,
 after all
 Contending with a wolf! Save you I must and
 shall, 170

Terentii!

“How now? What, you still head the race,
Your eyes and tongue and teeth crave fresh food,
Satan-face?

There and there! Plain I struck green fire out!
Flash again?

All a poor fist can do to damage eyes proves vain!

My fist — why not crunch that? He is wanton
for . . . O God,

Why give this wolf his taste? Common wolves
scrape and prod

The earth till out they scratch some corpse — mere
putrid flesh!

Why must this glutton leave the faded, choose the
fresh?

Terentii — God, feel! — his neck keeps fast thy
bag

Of holy things, saints' bones, this Satan-face will
drag

Forth, and devour along with him, our Pope de-
clared

The relics were to save from danger!

“Spurned, not spared!

’T was through my arms, crossed arms, he — nuz-
zling now with snout,

Now ripping, tooth and claw — plucked, pulled
Terentii out,

A prize indeed! I saw — how could I else but
see? —

My precious one — I bit to hold back — pulled
from me!

Up came the others, fell to dancing — did the imps! —
Skipped as they scampered round. There’s one
in gray, and limps:

Who knows but old bad Mårpha, — she always
owed me spite
And envied me my births, — skulks out of doors at
night 190
And turns into a wolf, and joins the sisterhood,
And laps the youthful life, then slinks from out the
wood,
Squats down at door by dawn, spins there demure
as erst
— No strength, old crone, — not she! — to crawl
forth half a verst!

“Well, I escaped with one: ’twixt one and none
there lies
The space ’twixt heaven and hell. And see, a rose-
light dyes
The endmost snow: ’t is dawn, ’t is day, ’t is safe at
home!
We have outwitted you! Ay, monsters, snarl and
foam,
Fight each the other fiend, disputing for a share, —
Forgetful, in your greed, our finest off we bear, 200
Tough Droug and I, — my babe, my boy that shall
be man,
My man that shall be more, do all a hunter can
To trace and follow and find and catch and crucify
Wolves, wolfkins, all your crew! A thousand
deaths shall die
The whimperingest cub that ever squeezed the
teat!
‘Take that!’ we’ll stab you with, — ‘the tender-
ness we met
When, wretches, you danced round — not this,
thank God — not this!
Hellhounds, we balk you!’

“But — Ah, God above! — Bliss, bliss —
Not the band, no! And yet — yes, for Droug
knows him! One —

This only of them all has said ‘She saves a son!’ 210
His fellows disbelieve such luck: but he believes,
He lets them pick the bones, laugh at him in their
sleeves:

He’s off and after us, — one speck, one spot, one
ball

Grows bigger, bound on bound, — one wolf as
good as all!

Oh but I know the trick! Have at the snaky tongue!
That’s the right way with wolves! Go, tell your
mates I wrung

The panting morsel out, left you to howl your worst!
Now for it — now! Ah me! I know him — thrice-
accurst

Satan-face, — him to the end my foe!

“All fight’s in vain:

This time the green brass points pierce to my very
brain. 220

I fall — fall as I ought — quite on the babe I guard:
I overspread with flesh the whole of him. Too hard
To die this way, torn piecemeal! Move hence?
Not I — one inch!

Gnaw through me, through and through: flat thus
I lie nor flinch!

O God, the feel of the fang furrowing my shoulder!
— see!

It grinds — it grates the bone. O Ktrill under me,
Could I do more? Beside he knew wolf’s way to
win:

I clung, closed round like wax: yet in he wedged
and in,

Past my neck, past my breasts, my heart, until . . .
 how feels
 The onion-bulb your knife parts, pushing through
 its peels, 230
 Till out you scoop its clove wherein lie stalk and
 leaf
 And bloom and seed unborn?

“That slew me: yes, in brief,
 I died then, dead I lay doubtlessly till Droug stopped
 Here, I suppose. I come to life, I find me propped
 Thus — how or when or why, — I know not. Tell
 me, friends,
 All was a dream: laugh quick and say the night-
 mare ends!
 Soon I shall find my house: 't is over there: in proof,
 Save for that chimney heaped with snow, you 'd see
 the roof
 Which holds my three — my two — my one — not
 one?

“Life's mixed
 With misery, yet we live — must live. The Satan
 fixed 240
 His face on mine so fast, I took its print as pitch
 Takes what it cools beneath. Ivan Ivanovitch,
 'Tis you unharden me, you thaw, disperse the
 thing!
 Only keep looking kind, the horror will not cling.
 Your face smooths fast away each print of Satan.
 Tears
 — What good they do! Life's sweet, and all its
 after-years,
 Ivan Ivanovitch, I owe you! Yours am I!
 May God reward you, dear!”

Down she sank. Solemnly
 Ivàn rose, raised his axe, — for fitly, as she knelt,
 Her head lay: well-apart, each side, her arms hung,
 — dealt 250
 Lightning-swift thunder-strong one blow — no need
 of more!
 Headless she knelt on still: that pine was sound at
 core
 (Neighbors were used to say) — cast-iron-kernelled
 — which
 Taxed for a second stroke Ivàn Ivànovitch.

The man was scant of words as strokes. “It had
 to be:
 I could no other: God it was bade ‘Act for me!’”
 Then stooping, peering round — what is it now he
 lacks?
 A proper strip of bark wherewith to wipe his axe.
 Which done, he turns, goes in, closes the door
 behind.
 The others mute remain, watching the blood-snake
 wind 260
 Into a hiding-place among the splinter-heaps.

At length, still mute, all move: one lifts, — from
 where it steeps
 Redder each ruddy rag of pine, — the head: two
 more
 Take up the dripping body: then, mute still as be-
 fore,
 Move in a sort of march, march on till marching
 ends
 Opposite to the church; where halting, — who sus-
 pends,
 By its long hair, the thing, deposits in its place

The piteous head: once more the body shows no
trace

Of harm done: there lies whole the Louſcha, maid
and wife

And mother, loved until this latest of her life. 270

Then all sit on the bank of snow which bounds a space
Kept free before the porch for judgment: just the
place!

Presently all the souls, man, woman, child, which
make

The village up, are found assembling for the sake

Of what is to be done. The very Jews are there:

A Gipsy-troop, though bound with horses for the
Fair,

Squats with the rest. Each heart with its concep-
tion seethes

And simmers, but no tongue speaks: one may say,
— none breathes.

Anon from out the church totters the Pope — the
priest —

Hardly alive, so old, a hundred years at least. 280

With him, the Commune's head, a hoary senior too,

Stârosta, that's his style, — like Equity Judge
with you, —

Natural Jurisconsult: then, fenced about with furs,
Pomeschik, — Lord of the Land, who wields — and
none demurs —

A power of life and death. They stoop, survey the
corpse.

Then, straightened on his staff, the Stârosta — the
thorpe's

Sagaciousest old man — hears what you just have
heard,

From Droug's first inrush, all, up to Ivàn's last
word

"God bade me act for him: I dared not disobey!"

Silence — the Pomeschik broke with "A wild
wrong way 290

Of righting wrong — if wrong there were, such wrath
to rouse!

Why was not law observed? What article allows
Whoso may please to play the judge, and, judgment
dealt,

Play executioner, as promptly as we pelt
To death, without appeal, the vermin whose sole
fault

Has been — it dared to leave the darkness of its
vault,

Intrude upon our day! Too sudden and too rash!
What was this woman's crime? Suppose the church
should crash

Down where I stand, your lord: bound are my serfs
to dare 290

Their utmost that I 'scape: yet, if the crashing scare
My children, — as you are, — if sons fly, one and
all,

Leave father to his fate, — poor cowards though I
call

The runaways, I pause before I claim their life
Because they prized it more than mine. I would
each wife

Died for her husband's sake, each son to save his
sire:

'T is glory, I applaud — scarce duty, I require.
Ivàn Ivànovitch has done a deed that 's named
Murder by law and me: who doubts, may speak
unblamed!"

t

All turned to the old Pope. "Ay, children, I am
old — 309
How old, myself have got to know no longer. Rolled
Quite round, my orb of life, from infancy to age,
Seems passing back again to youth. A certain stage
At least I reach or dream I reach, where I discern
Truer truths, laws behold more lawlike than we
learn
When first we set our foot to tread the course I trod
With man to guide my steps: who leads me now is
God.
'Your young men shall see visions:' and in my youth
I saw
And paid obedience to man's visionary law:
'Your old men shall dream dreams:' and, in my age,
a hand
Conducts me through the cloud round law to where
I stand 320
Firm on its base, — know cause, who, before, knew
effect.

"The world lies under me: and nowhere I detect
So great a gift as this — God's own — of human
life.
'Shall the dead praise thee?' No! 'The whole
live world is rife,
God, with thy glory,' rather! Life then, God's best
of gifts,
For what shall man exchange? For life — when so
he shifts
The weight and turns the scale, lets life for life re-
store
God's balance, sacrifice the less to gain the more,
Substitute — for low life, another's or his own — 321
Life large and liker God's who gave it: thus alone

May life extinguish life that life may trulier be!
 How low this law descends on earth, is not for me
 To trace: complexed becomes the simple, intricate
 The plain, when I pursue law's winding. 'T is the
 straight
 Outflow of law I know and name: to law, the fount
 Fresh from God's footstool, friends, follow while I
 remount.

"A mother bears a child: perfection is complete
 So far in such a birth. Enabled to repeat
 The miracle of life, — herself was born so just
 A type of womankind, that God sees fit to trust 340
 Her with the holy task of giving life in turn.
 Crowned by this crowning pride, — how say you,
 should she spurn
 Regality — discrowned, unchilded, by her choice
 Of barrenness exchanged for fruit which made re-
 joice
 Creation, though life's self were lost in giving birth
 To life more fresh and fit to glorify God's earth?
 How say you, should the hand God trusted with
 life's torch
 Kindled to light the world — aware of sparks that
 scorch,
 Let fall the same? Forsooth, her flesh a fire-flake
 stings:
 The mother drops the child! Among what mon-
 strous things 350
 Shall she be classed? Because of motherhood, each
 male
 Yields to his partner place, sinks proudly in the
 scale:
 His strength owned weakness, wit — folly, and
 courage — fear,

Beside the female proved male's mistress — only
here.

The fox-dam, hunger-pined, will slay the felon sire
Who dares assault her whelp: the beaver, stretched
on fire,

Will die without a groan: no pang avails to wrest
Her young from where they hide — her sanctuary
breast.

What's here then? Answer me, thou dead one, as,
I trow, 359

Standing at God's own bar, he bids thee answer now!
Thrice crowned wast thou — each crown of pride, a
child — thy charge!

Where are they? Lost? Enough: no need that
thou enlarge

On how or why the loss: life left to utter 'lost'
Condemns itself beyond appeal. The soldier's post
Guards from the foe's attack the camp he sentinels:
That he no traitor proved, this and this only tells —
Over the corpse of him trod foe to foe's success.

Yet — one by one thy crowns torn from thee —
thou no less

To scare the world, shame God, — livedst! I hold
He saw

The unexampled sin, ordained the novel law, 370
Whereof first instrument was first intelligence
Found loyal here. I hold that, failing human sense,
The very earth had oped, sky fallen, to efface
Humanity's new wrong, motherhood's first disgrace.
Earth oped not, neither fell the sky, for prompt was
found

A man and man enough, head-sober and heart-
sound,

Ready to hear God's voice, resolute to obey.
Ivân Ivânovitch, I hold, has done, this day,

No otherwise than did, in ages long ago,
 Moses when he made known the purport of that
 flow 390
 Of fire athwart the law's twain-tables! I proclaim
 Ivàn Ivànovitch God's servant!"

At which name

Uprose that creepy whisper from out the crowd, is
 wont
 To swell and surge and sink when fellow-men con-
 front
 A punishment that falls on fellow flesh and blood,
 Appallingly beheld — shudderingly understood,
 No less, to be the right, the just, the merciful.
 "God's servant!" hissed the crowd.

When that Amen grew dull

And died away and left acquittal plain adjudged,
 "Amen!" last sighed the lord. "There's none shall
 say I grudged 390
 Escape from punishment in such a novel case.
 Deferring to old age and holy life, — be grace
 Granted! say I. No less, scruples might shake a
 sense
 Firmer than I boast mine. Law's law, and evidence
 Of breach therein lies plain, — blood-red-bright, —
 all may see!
 Yet all absolve the deed: absolved the deed must be!

"And next — as mercy rules the hour — methinks
 't were well
 You signify forthwith its sentence, and dispel
 The doubts and fears, I judge, which busy now the
 head 390
 Law puts a halter round — a halo — you, instead!

Ivan Ivanovitch — what think you he expects
Will follow from his feat? Go, tell him — law pro-
tects

Murder, for once: no need he longer keep behind
The Sacred Pictures — where skulks Innocence
enshrined,

Or I missay! Go, some! You others, haste and hide
The dismal object there: get done, whate'er betide!"

So, while the youngers raised the corpse, the elders
trooped

Silently to the house: where halting, some one
stooped,

Listened beside the door; all there was silent too.

Then they held counsel; then pushed door and,
passing through, 410

Stood in the murderer's presence.

Ivan Ivanovitch

Knelt, building on the floor that Kremlin rare and
rich

He deftly cut and carved on lazy winter nights.

Some five young faces watched, breathlessly, as, to
rights,

Piece upon piece, he reared the fabric nigh com-
plete.

Stèscha, Ivan's old mother, sat spinning by the heat
Of the oven where his wife Kàtia stood baking bread.

Ivan's self, as he turned his honey-colored head,

Was just in act to drop, 'twixt fir-cones, — each a
dome, —

The scooped-out yellow gourd presumably the
home 420

Of Kolokol the Big: the bell, therein to hitch,

— An acorn-cup — was ready: Ivan Ivanovitch

Turned with it in his mouth.

They told him he was free
As air to walk abroad. "How otherwise?" asked he.

TRAY

SING me a hero! Quench my thirst
Of soul, ye bards!

Quoth Bard the first:
"Sir Olaf, the good knight, did don
His helm and eke his habergeon . . ."
Sir Olaf and his bard —— !

"That sin-scathed brow" (quoth Bard the second)
"That eye wide ope as though Fate beckoned
My hero to some steep, beneath
Which precipice smiled tempting death" . . .
You too without your host have reckoned! 10

"A beggar-child" (let's hear this third!)
"Sat on a quay's edge: like a bird
Sang to herself at careless play,
And fell into the stream. 'Dismay!
Help, you the standers-by!' None stirred.

"Bystanders reason, think of wives
And children ere they risk their lives.
Over the balustrade has bounced
A mere instinctive dog, and pounced
Plumb on the prize. 'How well he dives! 20

"Up he comes with the child, see, tight
In mouth, alive too, clutched from quite
A depth of ten feet — twelve, I bet!
Good dog! What, off again? There's yet
Another child to save? All right!

"How strange we saw no other fall!
 It's instinct in the animal.
 Good dog! But he's a long while under:
 If he got drowned I should not wonder —
 Strong current, that against the wall! 30

"Here he comes, holds in mouth this time
 — What may the thing be? Well, that's prime!
 Now, did you ever? Reason reigns
 In man alone, since all Tray's pains
 Have fished — the child's doll from the slime!'

"And so, amid the laughter gay,
 Trotted my hero off, — old Tray,
 Till somebody, prerogativéd
 With reason, reasoned: 'Why he dived,
 His brain would show us, I should say. 40

"John, go and catch — or, if needs be,
 Purchase — that animal for me!
 By vivisection, at expense
 Of half-an-hour and eighteenpence,
 How brain secretes dog's soul, we'll see!"

NED BRATTS

'T WAS Bedford Special Assize, one daft Mid-
 summer's Day:
 A broiling blasting June, — was never its like, men
 say.
 Corn stood sheaf-ripe already, and trees looked
 yellow as that;
 Ponds drained dust-dry, the cattle lay foaming
 around each flat.

Inside town, dogs went mad, and folk kept bibbing
 beer
 While the parsons prayed for rain. 'T was horrible,
 yes — but queer:
 Queer — for the sun laughed gay, yet nobody
 moved a hand
 To work one stroke at his trade: as given to under-
 stand
 That all was come to a stop, work and such worldly
 ways,
 And the world's old self about to end in a merry
 blaze. 10
 Midsummer's Day moreover was the first of Bed-
 ford Fair,
 With Bedford Town's tag-rag and bobtail a-bowsing
 there.

But the Court House, Quality crammed: through
 doors ope, windows wide,
 High on the Bench you saw sit Lordships side by
 side.
 There frowned Chief Justice Jukes, fumed learned
 Brother Small,
 And fretted their fellow Judge: like threshers, one
 and all,
 Of a reek with laying down the law in a furnace.
 Why?
 Because their lungs breathed flame — the regular
 crowd forbye —
 From gentry pouring in — quite a nosegay, to be
 sure!
 How else could they pass the time, six mortal hours
 endure 20
 Till night should extinguish day, when matters
 might haply mend?

Meanwhile no bad resource was — watching begin
 and end
 Some trial for life and death, in a brisk five minutes'
 space,
 And betting which knave would 'scape, which hang,
 from his sort of face.

So, their Lordships toiled and moiled, and a deal of
 work was done
 (I warrant) to justify the mirth of the crazy
 sun
 As this and t' other lout, struck dumb at the sudden
 show
 Of red robes and white wigs, boggled nor answered
 "Boh!"
 When asked why he, Tom Styles, should not —
 because Jack Nokes
 Had stolen the horse — be hanged: for Judges
 must have their jokes,
 And louts must make allowance — let 's say, for
 some blue fly
 Which punctured a dewy scalp where the frizzles
 stuck awry —
 Else Tom had fleered scot-free, so nearly over and
 done
 Was the main of the job. Full-measure, the gentles
 enjoyed their fun,
 As a twenty-five were tried, rank puritans caught
 at prayer
 In a cow-house and laid by the heels, — have at
 'em, devil may care! —
 And ten were prescribed the whip, and ten a brand
 on the cheek,
 And five a slit of the nose — just leaving enough
 to tweak.

Well, things at jolly high-tide, amusement steeped
 in fire,
 While noon smote fierce the roof's red tiles to
 heart's desire, 40
 The Court a-simmer with smoke, one ferment of
 oozy flesh,
 One spirituous humming musk mount-mounting
 until its mesh
 Entoiled all heads in a fluster, and Serjeant Postle-
 thwayte
 — Dashing the wig oblique as he mopped his oily
 pate —
 Cried "Silence, or I grow grease! No loophole lets
 in air?
 Jurymen, — Guilty, Death! Gainsay me if you
 dare!"
 — Things at this pitch, I say, — what hubbub
 without the doors?
 What laughs, shrieks, hoots and yells, what rudest
 of uproars?

Bounce through the barrier throng a bulk comes
 rolling vast!
 Thumps, kicks, — no manner of use! — spite of
 them rolls at last 50
 Into the midst a ball which, bursting, brings to
 view
 Publican Black Ned Bratts and Tabby his big wife
 too:
 Both in a muck-sweat, both . . . were never such
 eye uplift
 At the sight of yawning hell, such nostrils — snouts
 that sniffed
 Sulphur, such mouths a-gape ready to swallow
 flame!

orrified, hideous, frank fiend-faces! yet, all the
 same,
 ixed with a certain . . . eh? how shall I dare
 style — mirth
 ie desperate grin of the guest that, could they
 break from earth,
 eaven was above, and hell might rage in impotence
 low the saved, the saved!

“Confound you! (no offence!)
 it of our way, — push, wife! Yonder their Wor-
 ships be!” 61
 ed Bratts has reached the bar, and “Hey, my
 Lords,” roars he,
 A Jury of life and death, Judges the prime of the
 land,
 onstables, javelineers, — all met, if I understand,
 o decide so knotty a point as whether ’t was Jack
 or Joan
 obbed the henroost, pinched the pig, hit the
 King’s Arms with a stone,
 opped the baby down the well, left the tithesman
 in the lurch,
 ; three whole Sundays running, not once at-
 tended church!
 hat a pother — do these deserve the parish-stocks
 or whip,
 ore or less brow to brand, much or little nose to
 snip, — 70
 hen, in our Public, plain stand we — that’s we
 stand here,
 and my Tab, brass-bold, brick-built of beef and
 beer,
 Do not we, slut? Step forth and show your
 beauty, jade!

Wife of my bosom — that 's the word now! What
 a trade
 We drove! None said us nay: nobody loved his
 life
 So little as wag a tongue against us, — did they,
 wife?
 Yet they knew us all the while, in their hearts, for
 what we are
 — Worst couple, rogue and quean, unhang'd —
 search near and far!
 Eh, Tab? The pedler, now — o'er his noggin —
 who warn'd a mate
 To cut and run, nor risk his pack where its loss of
 weight 80
 Was the least to dread, — aha, how we two laugh'd
 a-good
 As, stealing round the midden, he came on where I
 stood
 With billet poised and raised, — you, ready with
 the rope, —
 Ah, but that 's past, that 's sin repented of, we hope!
 Men knew us for that same, yet safe and sound
 stood we!
 The lily-liver'd knaves knew too (I've balk'd a
 d——)
 Our keeping the 'Pied Bull' was just a mere pretence:
 Too slow the pounds make food, drink, lodging,
 from out the pence!
 There 's not a stoppage to travel has chanced, this
 ten long year,
 No break into hall or grange, no lifting of nag or
 steer, 90
 Not a single roguery, from the clipping of a purse
 To the cutting of a throat, but paid us toll. Od's
 curse!

When Gipsy Smouch made bold to cheat us of our
 due,
 — Eh, Tab? the Squire's strong-box we helped the
 rascal to —
 I think he pulled a face, next Sessions' swinging-
 time!
 He danced the jig that needs no floor, — and, here 's
 the prime,
 'T was Scroggs that houghed the mare! Ay, those
 were busy days!

“Well, there we flourished brave, like scripture-
 trees called bays,
 Faring high, drinking hard, in money up to head
 — Not to say, boots and shoes, when . . . Zounds,
 I nearly said — 100
 Lord, to unlearn one's language! How shall we
 labor, wife?
 Have you, fast hold, the Book? Grasp, grip it, for
 your life!
 See, sirs, here 's life, salvation! Here 's — hold but
 out my breath —
 When did I speak so long without once swearing?
 'Sdeath,
 No, nor unhelped by ale since man and boy! And
 yet
 All yesterday I had to keep my whistle wet
 While reading Tab this Book: book? don't say
 'book' — they 're plays,
 Songs, ballads and the like: here 's no such strawy
 blaze,
 But sky wide ope, sun, moon, and seven stars out
 full-flare!
 Tab, help and tell! I'm hoarse. A mug! or —
 no, a prayer! 110

Dip for one out of the Book! Who wrote it in the
 Jail
 — He plied his pen unhelped by beer, sirs, I'll be
 bail!

"I've got my second wind. In trundles she—
 that's Tab.

'Why, Gammer, what's come now, that — bob-
 bing like a crab
 On Yule-tide bowl — your head's a-work and both
 your eyes
 Break loose? Afeard, you fool? As if the dead
 can rise!

Say — Bagman Dick was found last May with
 fuddling-cap
 Stuffed in his mouth: to choke's a natural mis-
 hap!'

'Gaffer, be — blessed,' cries she, 'and Bagman
 Dick as well!

I, you, and he are damned: this Public is our
 hell: 190

We live in fire, live coals don't feel! — once
 quenched, they learn —
 Cinders do, to what dust they moulder while they
 burn!'

"If you don't speak straight out,' says I — belike
 I swore —

'A knobstick, well you know the taste of, shall, once
 more,
 Teach you to talk, my maid!' She ups with such a
 face,
 Heart sunk inside me. 'Well, pad on, my prate-
 apace!'

“I’ve been about those laces we need for . . .
never mind!

If henceforth they tie hands, ’t is mine they’ll have
to bind.

You know who makes them best — the Tinker in
our cage, 129

Pulled-up for gospelling, twelve years ago: no age
To try another trade, — yet, so he scorned to take
Money he did not earn, he taught himself the make
Of laces, tagged and tough — Dick Bagman found
them so!

Good customers were we! Well, last week, you
must know

His girl, — the blind young chit, who hawks about
his wares, —

She takes it in her head to come no more — such
airs

These hussies have! Yet, since we need a stoutish
lace, —

“I’ll to the jail-bird father, abuse her to his face!”

So, first I filled a jug to give me heart, and then, 130
Primed to the proper pitch, I posted to their den —

Patmore — they style their prison! I tip the turn-
key, catch

My heart up, fix my face, and fearless lift the
latch —

Both arms a-kimbo, in bounce with a good round
oath

Ready for rapping out: no “Lawks” nor “By my
troth!”

“There sat my man, the father. He looked up:
what one feels

When heart that leapt to mouth drops down again
to heels!

He raised his hand . . . Hast seen, when drinking
 out the night,
 And in the day, earth grow another something quite
 Under the sun's first stare? I stood a very stone.

““Woman!” (a fiery tear he put in every tone),
 “How should my child frequent your house where
 lust is sport, 151
 Violence — trade? Too true! I trust no vague
 report.

Her angel's hand, which stops the sight of sin,
 leaves clear

The other gate of sense, lets outrage through the ear.
 What has she heard! — which, heard shall never be
 again.

Better lack food than feast, a Dives in the — wain
 Or reign or train — of Charles!” (His language
 was not ours:

'Tis my belief, God spoke: no tinker has such
 powers.)

“Bread, only bread they bring — my laces: if we
 broke

Your lump of leavened sin, the loaf's first crumb
 would choke!” 160

““Down on my marrow-bones! Then all at once
 rose he:

His brown hair burst a-spread, his eyes were suns
 to see:

Up went his hands: “Through flesh, I reach, I read
 thy soul!

So may some stricken tree look blasted, bough and
 bole,

Champed by the fire-tooth, charred without, and
 yet, thrice-bound

With dreriment about, within may life be found,
 A prisoned power to branch and blossom as before,
 Could but the gardener cleave the cloister, reach
 the core,

Loosen the vital sap: yet where shall help be found?
 Who says 'How save it?' — nor 'Why cumpers it
 the ground?' 170

Woman, that tree art thou! All sloughed about
 with scurf,

Thy stag-horns fright the sky, thy snake-roots
 sting the turf!

Drunkenness, wantonness, theft, murder gnash and
 gnarl

Thine outward, case thy soul with coating like the
 marle

Satan stamps flat upon each head beneath his hoof!
 And how deliver such? The strong men keep aloof,
 Lover and friend stand far, the mocking ones pass
 by,

Tophet gapes wide for prey: lost soul, despair and
 die!

What then? 'Look unto me and be ye saved!'
 saith God:

'I strike the rock, outstreats the life-stream at my
 rod! 180

Be your sins scarlet, wool shall they seem like, —
 although

As crimson red, yet turn white as the driven snow!'"

"There, there, there! All I seem to somehow
 understand

Is — that, if I reached home, 't was through the
 guiding hand

Of his blind girl which led and led me through the
 streets

And out of town and up to door again. What greets
First thing my eye, as limbs recover from their
swoon?

A book — this Book she gave at parting. “Father’s
boon —

The Book he wrote: it reads as if he spoke himself:
He cannot preach in bonds, so, — take it down from
shelf 190

When you want counsel, — think you hear his very
voice!”

“Wicked dear Husband, first despair and then
rejoice!

Dear wicked Husband, waste no tick of moment
more,

Be saved like me, bald trunk! There’s greenness
yet at core,

Sap under slough! Read, read!’

“Let me take breath, my lords!
I’d like to know, are these — hers, mine, or Bun-
yan’s words?

I’m ’wildered — scarce with drink, — nowise with
drink alone!

You’ll say, with heat: but heat’s no stuff to split a
stone

Like this black boulder — this flint heart of mine:
the Book —

That dealt the crashing blow! Sirs, here’s the fist
that shook 200

His beard till Wrestler Jem howled like a just-
lugged bear!

You had brained me with a feather: at once I grew
aware

Christmas was meant for me. A burden at your
back,

Good Master Christmas? Nay, — yours was that
 Joseph's sack,
 — Or whose it was, — which held the cup, — com-
 pared with mine!
 Robbery loads my loins, perjury cracks my chine,
 Adultery . . . nay, Tab, you pitched me as I flung!
 One word, I'll up with fist . . . No, sweet spouse,
 hold your tongue!

“I'm hasting to the end. The Book, sirs — take
 and read!
 You have my history in a nutshell, — ay, indeed! 210
 It must off, my burden! See, — slack straps and
 into pit,
 Roll, reach the bottom, rest, rot there — a plague
 on it!
 For a mountain's sure to fall and bury Bedford
 Town,
 ‘Destruction’ — that's the name, and fire shall
 burn it down!
 O 'scape the wrath in time! Time's now, if not
 too late.
 How can I pilgrimage up to the wicket-gate?
 Next comes Despond the slough: not that I fear to
 pull
 Through mud, and dry my clothes at brave House
 Beautiful —
 But it's late in the day, I reckon: had I left years
 ago
 Town, wife, and children dear . . . Well, Christ-
 mas did, you know! — 220
 Soon I had met in the valley and tried my cudgel's
 strength
 On the enemy horned and winged, a-straddle across
 its length!

Have at his horns, thwick — thwack: they snap,
see! Hoof and hoof —

Bang, break the fetlock-bones! For love's sake,
keep aloof

Angels! I'm man and match, — this cudgel for my
flail, —

To thresh him, hoofs and horns, bat's wing and
serpent's tail!

A chance gone by! But then, what else does Hope-
ful ding

Into the deafest ear except — hope, hope's the
thing?

Too late i' the day for me to thrid the windings:
but

There's still a way to win the race by death's short
cut! 230

Did Master Faithful need climb the Delightful
Mounts?

No, straight to Vanity Fair, — a fair, by all accounts,
Such as is held outside, — lords, ladies, grand and
gay, —

Says he in the face of them, just what you hear me
say.

And the Judges brought him in guilty, and brought
him out

To die in the market-place — St. Peter's Green's
about

The same thing: there they flogged, flayed, buffeted,
lanced with knives,

Pricked him with swords, — I'll swear, he'd full
a cat's nine lives, —

So to this end at last came Faithful, — ha, ha, he!
Who holds the highest card? for there stands hid,
you see, 240

Behind the rabble-rout, a chariot, pair and all:

He's in, he's off, he's up, through clouds, at trumpet-
 call,
 Carried the nearest way to Heaven-gate! Odds my
 life —
 Has nobody a sword to spare? not even a knife?
 Then hang me, draw and quarter! Tab — do the
 same by her!
 O Master Worldly-Wiseman . . . that's Master
 Interpreter,
 Take the will, not the deed! Our gibbet's handy
 close:
 Forestall Last Judgment-Day! Be kindly, not mo-
 rose!
 There wants no earthly judge-and-jurying: here we
 stand — 249
 Sentence our guilty selves: so, hang us out of hand!
 Make haste for pity's sake! A single moment's loss
 Means — Satan's lord once more: his whisper
 shoots across
 All singing in my heart, all praying in my brain,
 'It comes of heat and beer!' — hark how he guffaws
 plain!
 'To-morrow you'll wake bright, and, in a safe skin,
 hug
 Your sound selves, Tab and you, over a foaming
 jug!
 You've had such qualms before, time out of mind!
 He's right!
 Did not we kick and cuff and curse away, that night
 When home we blindly reeled, and left poor hump-
 back Joe
 I' the lurch to pay for what . . . somebody did,
 you know! 250
 Both of us maundered then 'Lame humpback, —
 never more

Will he come limping, drain his tankard at our door!
 He 'll swing, while — somebody . . . ' Says Tab,
 'No, for I 'll peach!

'I 'm for you, Tab,' cries I, 'there 's rope enough for
 each!'

So blubbered we, and bussed, and went to bed upon
 The grace of Tab's good thought: by morning, all
 was gone!

We laughed — 'What 's life to him, a cripple of no
 account?'

Oh, waves increase around — I feel them mount
 and mount!

Hang us! To-morrow brings Tom Bearward with
 his bears:

One new black-muzzled brute beats Sackerson, he
 swears:

(Sackerson, for my money!) And, baiting o'er, the
 Brawl

They lead on Turner's Patch, — lads, lasses, up
 tails all, —

I'm i' the thick o' the throng! That means the
 Iron Cage,

— Means the Lost Man inside! Where 's hope for
 such as wage

War against light? Light 's left, light 's here, I
 hold light still,

So does Tab — make but haste to hang us both!
 You will?"

I promise, when he stopped you might have heard
 a mouse

Squeak, such a death-like hush sealed up the old
 Mote House.

But when the mass of man sank meek upon his
 knees,

While Tab, alongside, wheezed a hoarse "Do hang
us, please!" 280

Why, then the waters rose, no eye but ran with tears,
Hearts heaved, heads thumped, until, paying all
past arrears

Of pity and sorrow, at last a regular scream out-
broke

Of triumph, joy and praise.

My Lord Chief Justice spoke,
First mopping brow and cheek, where still, for one
that budged,

Another bead broke fresh: "What Judge, that ever
judged

Since first the world began, judged such a case as
this?

Why, Master Bratts, long since, folk smelt you out,
I wis!

I had my doubts, i' faith, each time you played the
fox 280

Convicting geese of crime in yonder witness-box —
Yea, much did I misdoubt, the thief that stole her
eggs

Was hardly goosey's self at Reynard's game, i'
feggs!

Yet thus much was to praise — you spoke to point,
direct —

Swore you heard, saw the theft: no jury could sus-
pect —

Dared to suspect, — I'll say, — a spot in white so
clear:

Goosey was throttled, true: but thereof godly fear
Came of example set, much as our laws intend;

And, though a fox confessed, you proved the Judge's
friend.

What if I had my doubts? Suppose I gave them
breath,

Brought you to bar: what work to do, ere 'Guilty,
Death,' — 300

Had paid our pains! What heaps of witnesses to
drag

From holes and corners, paid from out the County's
bag!

Trial three dog-days long! *Amicus Curiae* — that's
Your title, no dispute — truth-telling Master Bratts!

Thank you, too, Mistress Tab! Why doubt one
word you say?

Hanging you both deserve, hanged both shall be
this day!

The tinker needs must be a proper man. I've heard
He lies in Jail long since: if Quality's good word

Warrants me letting loose, — some householder, I
mean —

Freeholder, better still, — I don't say but — be-
tween 310

Now and next Sessions . . . Well! Consider of his
case,

I promise to, at least: we owe him so much grace.

Not that — no, God forbid! — I lean to think, as
you,

The grace that such repent is any jail-bird's due:

I rather see the fruit of twelve years' pious reign —
Astræa Redux, Charles restored his rights again!

— Of which, another time! I somehow feel a peace
Stealing across the world. May deeds like this
increase!

So, Master Sheriff, stay that sentence I pronounced
On those two dozen odd: deserving to be trounced

Soundly, and yet . . . well, well, at all events
despatch 321

This pair of — shall I say, sinner-saints? — ere we
catch
Their jail-distemper too. Stop tears, or I'll indite
All weeping Bedfordshire for turning Bunyanite!"

So, forms were galloped through. If Justice, on the
spur,
Proved somewhat expeditious, would Quality de-
mur?
And happily hanged were they, — why lengthen
out my tale? —
Where Bunyan's Statue stands facing where stood
his Jail.

DRAMATIC IDYLS

SECOND SERIES

1880

“You are sick, that ’s sure” — they say:
“Sick of what?” — they disagree.
“’T is the brain” — thinks Doctor A;
“’T is the heart” — holds Doctor B;
The liver — my life I ’d lay!”
“The lungs!” “The lights!”

Ah me!

So ignorant of man’s whole
Of bodily organs plain to see —
So sage and certain, frank and free,
About what ’s under lock and key — 10
Man’s soul!

ECHETLOS

HERE is a story shall stir you! Stand up, Greeks
dead and gone,
Who breasted, beat Barbarians, stemmed Persia
rolling on,
Did the deed and saved the world, for the day was
Marathon!

No man but did his manliest, kept rank and fought
away
In his tribe and file: up, back, out, down — was the
spear-arm play:
Like a wind-whipt branchy wood, all spear-arms
a-swing that day!





1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the importance of using reliable sources and ensuring the integrity of the data collection process.

3. The third part of the document provides a detailed overview of the results of the study. It includes a summary of the key findings and a discussion of their implications for the field of research.

4. The final part of the document concludes with a series of recommendations for future research and practice. It suggests areas for further exploration and provides practical advice for implementing the findings of the study.

But one man kept no rank and his sole arm plied
no spear,
As a flashing came and went, and a form i' the van,
the rear,
Brightened the battle up, for he blazed now there,
now here.

Nor helmed nor shielded, he! but, a goat-skin all his
wear, 10
Like a tiller of the soil, with a clown's limbs broad
and bare,
Went he ploughing on and on: he pushed with a
ploughman's share.

Did the weak mid-line give way, as tunnies on
whom the shark
Precipitates his bulk? Did the right-wing halt
when, stark
On his heap of slain lay stretched Kallimachos
Polemarch?

Did the steady phalanx falter! To the rescue, at
the need,
The clown was ploughing Persia, clearing Greek
earth of weed,
As he routed through the Sakian and rooted up the
Mede.

But the deed done, battle won, — nowhere to be
descried
On the meadow, by the stream, at the marsh, —
look far and wide 20
From the foot of the mountain, no, to the last
blood-plashed seaside, —

Not anywhere on view blazed the large limbs
 thonged and brown,
 Shearing and clearing still with the share before
 which — down
 To the dust went Persia's pomp, as he ploughed for
 Greece, that clown!

How spake the Oracle? "Care for no name at all!
 Say but just this: 'We praise one helpful whom we
 call
 The Holder of the Ploughshare.' The great deed
 ne'er grows small."

Not the great name! Sing — woe for the great
 name Miltiadés
 And its end at Paros isle! Woe for Themistokles
 — Satrap in Sardis court! Name not the clown like
 these! so

CLIVE

I AND Clive were friends — and why not? Friends!
 I think you laugh, my lad.
 Clive it was gave England India, while your father
 gives — egad,
 England nothing but the graceless boy who lures
 him on to speak —
 "Well, Sir, you and Clive were comrades — " with
 a tongue thrust in your cheek!
 Very true: in my eyes, your eyes, all the world's
 eyes, Clive was man,
 I was, am and ever shall be — mouse, nay, mouse
 of all its clan
 Sorriest sample, if you take the kitchen's estimate
 for fame;

While the man Clive — he fought Plassy, spoiled
 the clever foreign game,
 Conquered and annexed and Englished!

Never mind! As o'er my punch
 (You away) I sit of evenings, — silence, save for
 biscuit-crunch, 10
 Black, unbroken, — thought grows busy, thrids
 each pathway of old years,
 Notes this forthright, that meander, till the long-
 past life appears
 Like an outspread map of country plodded through,
 each mile and rood,
 Once, and well remembered still: I'm startled in
 my solitude
 Ever and anon by — what's the sudden mocking
 light that breaks
 On me as I slap the table till no rumner-glass but
 shakes
 While I ask — aloud, I do believe, God help me! —
 “Was it thus?”
 Can it be that so I faltered, stopped when just one
 step for us — ”
 (Us, — you were not born, I grant, but surely some
 day born would be)
 “ — One bold step had gained a province” (figura-
 tive talk, you see) 20
 “Got no end of wealth and honor, — yet I stood
 stock still no less?”
 — “For I was not Clive,” you comment: but it
 needs no Clive to guess
 Wealth were handy, honor ticklish, did no writing
 on the wall
 Warn me “Trespasser, 'ware man-traps!” Him
 who braves that notice — call

Hero! none of such heroics suit myself who read
 plain words,
 Doff my hat, and leap no barrier. Scripture says
 the land 's the Lord's:
 Louts then — what avail the thousand, noisy in a
 smock-frocked ring,
 All-agog to have me trespass, clear the fence, be
 Clive their king?
 Higher warrant must you show me ere I set one
 foot before
 T' other in that dark direction, though I stand for
 evermore
 Poor as Job and meek as Moses. Evermore? No!
 By-and-by
 Job grows rich and Moses valiant, Clive turns out
 less wise than I.
 Don't object "Why call him friend, then?" Power
 is power, my boy, and still
 Marks a man, — God's gift magnific, exercised for
 good or ill.
 You've your boot now on my hearth-rug, tread
 what was a tiger's skin:
 Rarely such a royal monster as I lodged the bullet in!
 True, he murdered half a village, so his own death
 came to pass;
 Still, for size and beauty, cunning, courage — ah,
 the brute he was!
 Why, that Clive, — that youth, that greenhorn,
 that quill-driving clerk, in fine, —
 He sustained a siege in Arcot. . . . But the world
 knows! Pass the wine.
 Where did I break off at? How bring Clive in? Oh,
 you mentioned "fear"!
 Just so: and, said I, that minds me of a story you
 shall hear.

We were friends then, Clive and I: so, when the
clouds, about the orb
Late supreme, encroaching slowly, surely, threat-
ened to absorb
Ray by ray its noontide brilliance, — friendship
might, with steadier eye
Drawing near, bear what had burned else, now no
blaze — all majesty.
Too much bee's-wing floats my figure? Well, sup-
pose a castle's new:
None presume to climb its ramparts, none find foot-
hold sure for shoe
'Twixt those squares and squares of granite plat-
ing the impervious pile
As his scale-mail's warty iron cuirasses a croco-
dile 50
Reels that castle thunder-smitten, storm-disman-
tled? From without
Scrambling up by crack and crevice, every cockney
prates about
Towers — the heap he kicks now! turrets — just
the measure of his cane!
Will that do? Observe moreover — (same simili-
tude again) —
Such a castle seldom crumbles by sheer stress of
cannonade:
'Tis when foes are foiled and fighting's finished
that vile rains invade,
Grass o'ergrows, o'ergrows till night-birds congre-
gating find no holes
Fit to build in like the topmost sockets made for
banner-poles
So Clive crumbled slow in London — crashed at
last.

A week before,
 Dining with him, — after trying churchyard-chat
 of days of yore, — 60
 Both of us stopped, tired as tombstones, head-piece,
 foot-piece, when they lean
 Each to other, drowsed in fog-smoke, o'er a coffined
 Past between.
 As I saw his head sink heavy, guessed the soul's
 extinguishment
 By the glazing eyeball, noticed how the furtive
 fingers went
 Where a drug-box skulked behind the honest
 liquor, — "One more throw
 Try for Clive!" thought I: "Let's venture some
 good rattling question!" So —
 "Come, Clive, tell us" — out I blurted — "what
 to tell in turn, years hence,
 When my boy — suppose I have one — asks me
 on what evidence
 I maintain my friend of Plassy proved a warrior
 every whit
 Worth your Alexanders, Cæsars, Marlboroughs
 and — what said Pitt? — 70
 Frederick the Fierce himself! Clive told me once"
 — I want to say —
 "Which feat out of all those famous doings bore
 the bell away
 — In his own calm estimation, mark you, not the
 mob's rough guess —
 Which stood foremost as evincing what Clive
 called courageousness!
 Come! what moment of the minute, what speck-
 centre in the wide
 Circle of the action saw your mortal fairly
 deified?

(Let alone that filthy sleep-stuff, swallow bold this
wholesome Port!)

If a friend has leave to question, — when were you
most brave, in short?"

Up he arched his brows o' the instant — formidably
Clive again.

"When was I most brave? I'd answer, were the
instance half as plain 80

As another instance that 's a brain-lodged crystal —
curse it! — here

Freezing when my memory touches — ugh! — the
time I felt most fear.

Ugh! I cannot say for certain if I showed fear —
anyhow,

Fear I felt, and, very likely, shuddered, since I
shiver now."

"Fear!" smiled I. "Well, that 's the rarer: that 's
a specimen to seek,

Ticket up in one's museum, *Mind-Freaks, Lord
Clive's Fear, Unique!*"

Down his brows dropped. On the table painfully
he pored as though

Tracing, in the stains and streaks there, thoughts
encrusted long ago.

When he spoke 't was like a lawyer reading word
by word some will,

Some blind jungle of a statement, — beating on and
on until 80

Out there leaps fierce life to fight with.

"This fell in my factor-days.
Desk-drudge, slaving at St. David's, one must game,
or drink, or craze.

I chose gaming: and, — because your high-flown
 gamesters hardly take
 Umbrage at a factor's elbow if the factor pays his
 stake, —
 I was winked at in a circle where the company was
 choice,
 Captain This and Major That, men high of color,
 loud of voice,
 Yet indulgent, condescending to the modest juvenile
 Who not merely risked but lost his hard-earned
 guineas with a smile.

“Down I sat to cards, one evening, — had for my
 antagonist
 Somebody whose name's a secret — you'll know
 why — so, if you list, 100
 Call him Cock o' the Walk, my scarlet son of Mars
 from head to heel!
 Play commenced: and, whether Cocky fancied
 that a clerk must feel
 Quite sufficient honor came of bending over one
 green baize,
 I the scribe with him the warrior, — guessed no
 penman dared to raise
 Shadow of objection should the honor stay but
 playing end
 More or less abruptly, — whether disinclined he
 grew to spend
 Practice strictly scientific on a booby born to
 stare
 At — not ask of — lace-and-ruffles if the hand they
 hide plays fair, —
 Anyhow, I marked a movement when he bade me
 'Cut!'

"I rose.

'Such the new manœuvre, Captain? I'm a novice:
 knowledge grows. 110

What, you force a card, you cheat, Sir?'

"Never did a thunder-clap
 Cause emotion, startle Thyrsis locked with Chloe
 in his lap,
 As my word and gesture (down I flung my cards to
 join the pack)
 Fired the man of arms, whose visage, simply red
 before, turned black.

"When he found his voice, he stammered 'That
 expression once again!'

"Well, you forced a card and cheated!'

"Possibly a factor's brain,
 Busied with his all-important balance of accounts,
 may deem
 Weighing words superfluous trouble: *cheat* to clerkly
 ears may seem
 Just the joke for friends to venture: but we are not
 friends, you see!
 When a gentleman is joked with, — if he's good at
 repartee, 120
 He rejoins, as do I — Sirrah, on your knees, with-
 draw in full!
 Beg my pardon, or be sure a kindly bullet through
 your skull
 Lets in light and teaches manners to what brain it
 finds! Choose quick —
 Have your life snuffed out or, kneeling, pray me
 trim yon candle-wick!'

“Well, you cheated!”

“Then outbroke a howl from
 all the friends around.
 To his feet sprang each in fury, fists were clenched
 and teeth were ground.
 ‘End it! no time like the present! Captain, yours
 were our disgrace!
 No delay, begin and finish! Stand back, leave the
 pair a space!
 Let civilians be instructed: henceforth simply ply
 the pen,
 Fly the sword! This clerk’s no swordsman? Suit
 him with a pistol, then! 130
 Even odds! A dozen paces ’twixt the most and
 least expert
 Make a dwarf a giant’s equal: nay, the dwarf, if
 he’s alert,
 Likelier hits the broader target!’

“Up we stood accordingly.
 As they handed me the weapon, such was my soul’s
 thirst to try
 Then and there conclusions with this bully, tread on
 and stamp out
 Every spark of his existence, that, — crept close to,
 curled about
 By that toying tempting teasing fool-forefinger’s
 middle joint, —
 Don’t you guess? — the trigger yielded. Gone my
 chance! and at the point
 Of such prime success moreover: scarce an inch
 above his head
 Went my ball to hit the wainscot. He was living,
 I was dead. 140

“Up he marched in flaming triumph — ’t was his
 right, mind! — up, within
 Just an arm’s length. ‘Now, my clerkling,’ chuckled
 Cocky with a grin
 As the levelled piece quite touched me, ‘Now, Sir
 Counting-House, repeat
 That expression which I told you proved bad
 manners! Did I cheat?’

“‘Cheat you did, you knew you cheated, and, this
 moment, know as well.
 As for me, my homely breeding bids you — fire
 and go to Hell!’

“Twice the muzzle touched my forehead. Heavy
 barrel, flurried wrist,
 Either spoils a steady lifting. Thrice: then, ‘Laugh
 at Hell who list,
 I can’t! God’s no fable either. Did this boy’s
 eye wink once? No!
 There’s no standing him and Hell and God all three
 against me, — so, 150
 I did cheat!’

“And down he threw the pistol, out
 rushed — by the door
 Possibly, but, as for knowledge if by chimney, roof
 or floor,
 He effected disappearance — I’ll engage no glance
 was sent
 That way by a single starrer, such a blank astonish-
 ment
 Swallowed up their senses: as for speaking — mute
 they stood as mice.

"Mute not long, though! Such reaction, such a
 hubbub in a trice!
 'Rogue and rascal! Who'd have thought it?
 What's to be expected next,
 When His Majesty's Commission serves a sharper
 as pretext
 For . . . But where's the need of wasting time
 now? Naught requires delay:
 Punishment the Service cries for: let disgrace be
 wiped away 160
 Publicly, in good broad daylight! Resignation?
 No, indeed
 Drum and fife must play the Rogue's March, rank
 and file to be free to speed
 Tardy marching on the rogue's part by appliance
 in the rear
 — Kicks administered shall right this wronged
 civilian, — never fear,
 Mister Clive, for — though a clerk — you bore
 yourself — suppose we say —
 Just as would beseem a soldier!'

"Gentlemen, attention — pray!
 First, one word!'

"I passed each speaker severally in review.
 When I had precise their number, names and styles,
 and fully knew
 Over whom my supervision thenceforth must ex-
 tend, — why, then —

"Some five minutes since, my life lay — as you all
 saw, gentlemen — 170
 At the mercy of your friend there. Not a single
 voice was raised

In arrest of judgment, not one tongue — before
 my powder blazed —
 Ventured “Can it be the youngster blundered,
 really seemed to mark
 Some irregular proceeding? We conjecture in the
 dark,
 Guess at random, — still, for sake of fair play —
 what if for a freak,
 In a fit of absence, — such things have been! — if
 our friend proved weak
 — What’s the phrase? — corrected fortune! Look
 into the case, at least!”
 Who dared interpose between the altar’s victim
 and the priest?
 Yet he spared me! You eleven! Whosoever, all
 or each,
 To the disadvantage of the man who spared me,
 utters speech 180
 — To his face, behind his back, — that speaker
 has to do with me:
 Me who promise, if positions change and mine the
 chance should be,
 Not to imitate your friend and waive advantage!’

“Twenty-five

Years ago this matter happened: and ’t is certain,”
 added Clive,
 “Never, to my knowledge, did Sir Cocky have a
 single breath
 Breathed against him: lips were closed throughout
 his life, or since his death,
 For if he be dead or living I can tell no more than
 you.
 All I know is — Cocky had one chance more; how
 he used it, — grew

Out of such unlucky habits, or relapsed, and back
 again
 Brought the late-ejected devil with a score more
 in his train, — 190
 That 's for you to judge. Reprieval I procured, at
 any rate.
 Ugh — the memory of that minute's fear makes
 gooseflesh rise! Why prate
 Longer? You 've my story, there 's your instance:
 fear I did, you see!"

"Well" — I hardly kept from laughing — "if I
 see it, thanks must be
 Wholly to your Lordship's candor. Not that — in
 a common case —
 When a bully caught at cheating thrusts a pistol
 in one's face,
 I should underrate, believe me, such a trial to the
 nerve!
 'Tis no joke, at one-and-twenty, for a youth to
 stand nor swerve.
 Fear I naturally look for — unless, of all men
 alive,
 I am forced to make exception when I come to
 Robert Clive. 200
 Since at Arcot, Plassy, elsewhere, he and death —
 the whole world knows —
 Came to somewhat closer quarters."

Quarters? Had we come to blows,
 Clive and I, you had not wondered — up he sprang
 so, out he rapped
 Such a round of oaths — no matter! I'll endeavor
 to adapt

To our modern usage words he — well, 't was
friendly license — flung
At me like so many fire-balls, fast as he could wag
his tongue.

“You — a soldier? You — at Plassy? Yours the
faculty to nick
Instantaneously occasion when your foe, if lightning
quick,
— At his mercy, at his malice, — has you, through
some stupid inch
Undefended in your bulwark? Thus laid open, —
not to finch 210
— That needs courage, you 'll concede me. Then,
look here! Suppose the man,
Checking his advance, his weapon still extended,
not a span
Distant from my temple, — curse him! — quietly
had bade me ‘There!
Keep your life, calumniator! — worthless life I
freely spare:
Mine you freely would have taken — murdered
me and my good fame
Both at once — and all the better! Go, and thank
your own bad aim
Which permits me to forgive you!’ What if,
with such words as these,
He had cast away his weapon? How should I have
borne me, please?
Nay, I 'll spare you pains and tell you. This, and
only this, remained —
Pick his weapon up and use it on myself. I so had
gained

Sleep the earlier, leaving England probably to pay
on still

Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at the French-
man's will."

"Such the turn," said I "the matter takes with
you? Then I abate

— No, by not one jot nor tittle, — of your act my
estimate.

Fear — I wish I could detect there: courage fronts
me, plain enough —

Call it desperation, madness — never mind! for
here's in rough

Why, had mine been such a trial, fear had over-
come disgrace.

True, disgrace were hard to bear: but such a rush
against God's face

— None of that for me, Lord Plassy, since I go to
church at times,

Say the creed my mother taught me! Many years
in foreign climes

Rub some marks away — not all, though! We
poor sinners reach life's brink,

Overlook what rolls beneath it, recklessly enough,
but think

There's advantage in what's left us — ground to
stand on, time to call

'Lord, have mercy!' ere we topple over — do not
leap, that's all!"

Oh, he made no answer, — re-absorbed into his
cloud. I caught

Something like "Yes — courage: only fools will
call it fear."

MULÉYKEH

191

If aught
Comfort you, my great unhappy hero Clive, in
that I heard,
Next week, how your own hand dealt you doom,
and uttered just the word
“Fearfully courageous!” — this, be sure, and nothing
else I groaned.
I’m no Clive, nor parson either: Clive’s worst deed
— we’ll hope condoned. 240

MULÉYKEH

If a stranger passed the tent of Hóseyn, he cried
“A churl’s!”
Or haply “God help the man who has neither salt
nor bread!”
— “Nay,” would a friend exclaim, “he needs nor
pity nor scorn
More than who spends small thought on the shore-
sand, picking pearls,
— Holds but in light esteem the seed-sort, bears
instead
On his breast a moon-like prize, some orb which of
night makes morn.
“What if no flocks and herds enrich the son of
Sinán?
They went when his tribe was mulct, ten thousand
camels the due,
Blood-value paid perforce for a murder done of
old.
‘God gave them, let them go! But never since
time began, 10

Muléykeh, peerless mare, owned master the match
of you,
And you are my prize, my Pearl: I laugh at men's
land and gold!

"So in the pride of his soul laughs Hóseyn — and
right, I say.
Do the ten steeds run a race of glory? Outstripping
all,
Ever Muléykeh stands first steed at the victor's staff.
Who started, the owner's hope, gets shamed and
named, that day.
'Silence,' or, last but one, is 'The Cuffed,' as we
use to call
Whom the paddock's lord thrusts forth. Right,
Hóseyn, I say, to laugh!"

"Boasts he Muléykeh the Pearl?" the stranger
replies: "Be sure ¹⁹
On him I waste nor scorn nor pity, but lavish both
On Duhl the son of Sheybán, who withers away in
heart
For envy of Hóseyn's luck. Such sickness admits
no cure.
A certain poet has sung, and sealed the same with
an oath,
'For the vulgar — flocks and herds! The Pearl is
a prize apart.'"

Lo, Duhl the son of Sheybán comes riding to
Hóseyn's tent,
And he casts his saddle down, and enters and
"Peace!" bids he.
"You are poor, I know the cause: my plenty shall
mend the wrong.

"Tis said of your Pearl — the price of a hundred
 camels spent
 In her purchase were scarce ill paid: such prudence
 is far from me
 Who proffer a thousand. Speak! Long parley
 may last too long." 30

Said Hóseyn "You feed young beasts a many, of
 famous breed,
 Slit-eared, unblemished, fat, true offspring of
 Múzennem:
 There stumbles no weak-eyed she in the line as it
 climbs the hill.
 But I love Muléykeh's face: her forefront whitens
 indeed
 Like a yellowish wave's cream-crest. Your camels
 — go gaze on them!
 Her fetlock is foam-splashed too. Myself am the
 richer still."

A year goes by: lo, back to the tent again rides Duhl.
 "You are open-hearted, ay — moist-handed, a very
 prince.
 Why should I speak of sale? Be the mare your
 simple gift!
 My son is pined to death for her beauty: my wife
 prompts 'Fool, 40
 Beg for his sake the Pearl! Be God the rewarder,
 since
 God pays debts seven for one: who squanders on
 Him shows thrift.'"

Said Hóseyn "God gives each man one life, like a
 lamp, then gives
 That lamp due measure of oil: lamp lighted — hold
 high, wave wide

Its comfort for others to share! once quench it,
 what help is left?
 The oil of your lamp is your son: I shine while
 Muléykeh lives.
 Would I beg your son to cheer my dark if Muléykeh
 died?
 It is life against life: what good avails to the life-
 bereft?"

Another year, and — hist! What craft is it Duhl
 designs?
 He alights not at the door of the tent as he did last
 time, 50
 But, creeping behind, he gropes his stealthy way by
 the trench
 Half-round till he finds the flap in the folding, for
 night combines
 With the robber — and such is he: Duhl, covetous
 up to crime,
 Must wring from Hóseyn's grasp the Pearl, by
 whatever the wrench.

"He was hunger-bitten, I heard: I tempted with
 half my store,
 And a gibe was all my thanks. Is he generous like
 Spring dew?
 Account the fault to me who chattered with such an
 one!
 He has killed, to feast chance comers, the creature
 he rode: nay, more —
 For a couple of singing-girls his robe has he torn in
 two:
 I will beg! Yet I nowise gained by the tale of my
 wife and son. 60

"I swear by the Holy House, my head will I never
 wash
 Till I filch his Pearl away. Fair dealing I tried,
 then guile,
 And now I resort to force. He said we must live or
 die:
 Let him die, then, — let me live! Be bold — but
 not too rash!
 I have found me a peeping-place: breast, bury your
 breathing while
 I explore for myself! Now, breathe! He deceived
 me not, the spy!

"As he said — there lies in peace Hóseyñ — how
 happy! Beside
 Stands tethered the Pearl: thrice winds her head-
 stall about his wrist:
 'Tis therefore he sleeps so sound — the moon
 through the roof reveals.
 And, loose on his left, stands too that other, known
 far and wide, 70
 Buhéyseh, her sister born: fleet is she yet ever
 missed
 The winning tail's fire-flash a-stream past the
 thunderous heels.

"No less she stands saddled and bridled, this
 second, in case some thief
 Should enter and seize and fly with the first, as I
 mean to do.
 What then? The Pearl is the Pearl: once mount
 her we both escape."
 Through the skirt-fold in glides Duhl, — so a ser-
 pent disturbs no leaf

In a bush as he parts the twigs entwining a nest:
 clean through,
 He is noiselessly at his work: as he planned, he
 performs the rape.

He has set the tent-door wide, has buckled the
 girth, has clipped
 The headstall away from the wrist he leaves thrice
 bound as before, 80
 He springs on the Pearl, is launched on the desert
 like bolt from bow,
 Up starts our plundered man: from his breast
 though the heart be ripped,
 Yet his mind has the mastery: behold, in a minute
 more,
 He is out and off and away on Buhéyseh, whose
 worth we know!

And Hóseyn — his blood turns flame, he has
 learned long since to ride,
 And Buhéyseh does her part, — they gain — they
 are gaining fast
 On the fugitive pair, and Duhl has Ed-Dárraj to
 cross and quit,
 And to reach the ridge El-Sabán, — no safety till
 that be spied!
 And Buhéyseh is, bound by bound, but a horse-
 length off at last,
 For the Pearl has missed the tap of the heel, the
 touch of the bit. 90

She shortens her stride, she chafes at her rider the
 strange and queer:
 Buhéyseh is mad with hope — beat sister she shall
 and must

Though Duhl, of the hand and heel so clumsy, she
has to thank.

She is near now, nose by tail — they are neck by
croup — joy! fear!

What folly makes Hóseyñ shout “Dog Duhl,
Damned son of the Dust,

Touch the right ear and press with your foot my
Pearl’s left flank!”

And Duhl was wise at the word, and Muléykeh as
prompt perceived

Who was urging redoubled pace, and to hear him
was to obey,

And a leap indeed gave she, and vanished for
evermore.

And Hóseyñ looked one long last look as who, all
bereaved, 100

Looks, fain to follow the dead so far as the living
may:

Then he turned Buhéyseh’s neck slow homeward,
weeping sore.

And, lo, in the sunrise, still sat Hóseyñ upon the
ground

Weeping: and neighbors came, the tribesmen of
Bénu-Asád

In the vale of green Er-Rass, and they questioned
him of his grief;

And he told from first to last how, serpent-like,
Duhl had wound

His way to the nest, and how Duhl rode like an ape,
so bad!

And how Buhéyseh did wonders, yet Pearl re-
mained with the thief.

And they jeered him, one and all: "Poor Hóseyn
 is crazed past hope!
 How else had he wrought himself his ruin, in for-
 tune's spite? 110
 To have simply held the tongue were a task for a
 boy or girl,
 And here were Muléykeh again, the eyed like an
 antelope,
 The child of his heart by day, the wife of his breast
 by night!" —
 "And the beaten in speed!" wept Hóseyn: "You
 never have loved my Pearl."

PIETRO OF ABANO

Petrus Aponensis — there was a magician!
 When that strange adventure happened, which I
 mean to tell my hearers,
 Nearly had he tried all trades — beside physician,
 Architect, astronomer, astrologer, — or worse:
 How else, as the old books warrant, was he able,
 All at once, through all the world, to prove the
 promptest of appearers
 Where was prince to cure, tower to build as high as
 Babel,
 Star to name or sky-sign read, — yet pouch, for
 pains, a curse?
 — Curse: for when a vagrant, — foot-sore, travel-
 tattered,
 Now a young man, now an old man, Turk or Arab,
 Jew or Gipsy, — 10
 Proffered folk in passing — O for pay, what mat-
 tered? —

"I'll be doctor, I'll play builder, star I'll name —
sign read!"

Soon as prince was cured, tower built, and fate
predicted,

"Who may you be?" came the question; when he
answered, "*Petrus ipse*,"

"Just as we divined!" cried folk — "A wretch
convicted

Long ago of dealing with the devil — you indeed!"

So, they cursed him roundly, all his labor's pay-
ment,

Motioned him — the convalescent prince would —
to vacate the presence:

Babylonians plucked his beard and tore his raiment,
Drove him from that tower he built: while, had he
peered at stars,

Town howled "Stone the quack who styles our ²⁰
Dog-star — Sirius!"

Country yelled "Aroint the churl who prophesies
we take no pleasance

Under vine and fig-tree, since the year's delirious,
Bears no crop of any kind, — all through the planet
Mars!"

Straightway would the whilom youngster grow a
grisard,

Or, as case might hap, the hoary eld drop off and
show a stripling.

Town and country groaned — indebted to a wizard!
"Curse — nay, kick and cuff him — fit requital of
his pains!

Gratitude in word or deed were wasted truly!

Rather make the Church amends by crying out on,
cramping, crippling 30

One who, on pretence of serving man, serves duly
Man's arch foe: not ours, be sure, but Satan's —
his the gains!"

Peter grinned and bore it, such disgraceful usage:
Somehow, cuffs and kicks and curses seem ordained
his like to suffer:

Prophet's pay with Christians, now as in the Jews'
age,

Still is — stoning: so, he meekly took his wage and
went,

— Sage again was found ensconced in those old
quarters,

Padua's blackest blindest by-street, — none the
worse, nay, somewhat tougher:

"Calculating," quoth he, "soon I join the martyrs,
Since, who magnify my lore on burning me are
bent." ¹ 40

Therefore, on a certain evening, to his alley
Peter slunk, all bruised and broken, sore in body,
sick in spirit,

Just escaped from Cairo where he launched a galley
Needing neither sails nor oars nor help of wind or
tide,

— Needing but the fume of fire so set a-flying

¹ "Studiando le mie cifre col compasso,
Rilevo che sarò presto sotterra,
Perchè del mio saper si fa gran chiasso,
E gl'ignoranti m'hanno mosso guerra."

Said to have been found in a well at Abano in the last century. They
were extemporaneously Englished thus: not as Father Prout chose to prefer
them: —

Studying my ciphers with the compass,
I reckon — I soon shall be below-ground;
Because of my lore folk make great rumpus,
And war on myself makes each dull rogue round. — R. B.

Wheels like mad which whirled you quick — North,
 South, where'er you pleased require it, —
 That is — would have done so had not priests come
 prying,
 Broke his engine up and bastinadoed him beside.

As he reached his lodging, stopped there unmolested,
 (Neighbors feared him, urchins fled him, few were
 bold enough to follow) 50
 While his fumbling fingers tried the lock and tested
 Once again the queer key's virtue, oped the sullen
 door, —
 Some one plucked his sleeve, cried "Master, pray
 your pardon!
 Grant a word to me who patient wait you in your
 archway's hollow!
 Hard on you men's hearts are: be not your heart
 hard on
 Me who kiss your garment's hem, O Lord of magic
 lore!

"Mage — say I, who no less, scorning tittle-tattle,
 To the vulgar give no credence when they prate of
 Peter's magic,
 Deem his art brews tempest, hurts the crops and
 cattle,
 Hinders fowls from laying eggs and worms from
 spinning silk, 60
 Rides upon a he-goat, mounts at need a broomstick:
 While the price he pays for this (so turns to comic
 what was tragic)
 Is — he may not drink — dreads like the Day of
 Doom's tick —
 One poor drop of sustenance ordained mere men —
 that's milk!

“Tell such tales to Padua! Think me no such
dullard!

Not from these benighted parts did I derive my
breath and being!

I am from a land whose cloudless skies are colored
Livelier, suns orb largelier, airs seem incense, —
while, on earth —

What, instead of grass, our fingers and our thumbs
cull,

Proves true moly! sounds and sights there help the
body's hearing, seeing, 70

Till the soul grows godlike: brief, — you front no
numskull

Shaming by ineptitude the Greece that gave him
birth!

“Mark within my eye its iris mystic-lettered —
That's my name! and note my ear — its swan-
shaped cavity, my emblem!

Mine's the swan-like nature born to fly unfettered
Over land and sea in search of knowledge — food
for song.

Art denied the vulgar! Geese grow fat on
barley,

Swans require ethereal provend, undesirous to re-
semble 'em —

Soar to seek Apollo, — favored with a parley
Such as, Master, you grant me — who will not hold
you long. 80

“Leave to learn to sing — for that your swan peti-
tions:

Master, who possess the secret, say not nay to such
a suitor!

All I ask is — bless mine, purest of ambitions!

Grant me leave to make my kind wise, free, and
happy! How?

Just by making me — as you are mine — their
model!

Geese have goose-thoughts: make a swan their
teacher first, then co-adjutor, —

Let him introduce swan-notions to each noddle, —
Geese will soon grow swans, and men become what
I am now!

“That’s the only magic — had but fools discern-
ment,

Could they probe and pass into the solid through
the soft and seeming! 90

Teach me such true magic — now and no adjourn-
ment!

Teach your art of making fools subserve the man
of mind!

Magic is the power we men of mind should practise,
Draw fools to become our drudges, docile hence-
forth, never dreaming —

While they do our hests for fancied gain — the
fact is

What they toil and moil to get proves falsehood:
truth’s behind!

“See now! you conceive some fabric — say, a man-
sion

Meet for monarch’s pride and pleasure: this is truth
— a thought has fired you,

Made you fain to give some cramped concept ex-
pansion,

Put your faculty to proof, fulfil your nature’s
task. 100

First you fascinate the monarch’s self: he fancies

He it was devised the scheme you execute as he
inspired you:

He in turn sets slaving insignificances

Toiling, moiling till your structure stands there —
all you ask!

“Soon the monarch’s known for what he was — a
ninny:

Soon the rabble-rout leave labor, take their work-
day wage and vanish:

Soon the late puffed bladder, pricked, shows lank
and skinny —

‘Who was its inflator?’ ask we, ‘whose the giant
lungs?’

Petri en pulmones! What though men prove in-
grates?

Let them — so they stop at crucifixion — buffet,
ban and banish! 110

Peter’s power’s apparent: human praise — its din
grates

Harsh as blame on ear unused to aught save angels’
tongues.

“Ay, there have been always, since our world existed,
Mages who possessed the secret — needed but to
stand still, fix eye

On the foolish mortal: straight was he enlisted
Soldier, scholar, servant, slave — no matter for the
style!

Only through illusion; ever what seemed profit —
Love or lucre — justified obedience to the *Ipse dixi*:
Work done — palace reared from pavement up to
soffit —

Was it strange if builders smelt out cheating all the
while? 110

“Let them pelt and pound, bruise, bray you in a mortar!

What’s the odds to you who seek reward of quite another nature?

You’ve enrolled your name where sages of your sort are,

— Michael of Constantinople, Hans of Halverstadt!
Nay and were you nameless, still you’ve your conviction

You it was and only you — what signifies the nomenclature? —

Ruled the world in fact, though how you ruled be fiction

Fit for fools: true wisdom’s magic you — if e’er man — had ’t!

“But perhaps you ask me ‘Since each ignoramus While he profits by such magic persecutes the benefactor,

What should I expect but — once I render famous

You as Michael, Hans and Peter — just one ingrate more?

If the vulgar prove thus, whatsoe’er the pelf be,
Pouched through my beneficence — and doom me dungeoned, chained, or racked, or

Fairly burned outright — how grateful will yourself be

When, his secret gained, you match your — master just before?’

“That’s where I await you! Please, revert a little!
What do folk report about you if not this — which, though chimeric,

Still, as figurative, suits you to a tittle —

That, — although the elements obey your nod and
 wink, 140
 Fades or flowers the herb you chance to smile or
 sigh at,
 While your frown bids earth quake palled by obscu-
 ration atmospheric, —
 Brief, although through nature naught resists your
fiat,
 There 's yet one poor substance mocks you — milk
 you may not drink!

“Figurative language! Take my explanation!
 Fame with fear, and hate with homage, these your
 art procures in plenty.
 All 's but daily dry bread: what makes moist the
 ration?
 Love, the milk that sweetens man his meal — alas,
 you lack:
 I am he who, since he fears you not, can love you.
 Love is born of heart not mind, *de corde natus haud*
de mente; 150
 Touch my heart and love 's yours, sure as shines
 above you
 Sun by day and star by night though earth should
 go to wrack!

“Stage by stage you lift me — kiss by kiss I hallow
 Whose but your dear hand my helper, punctual as
 at each new impulse
 I approach my aim? Shell chipped, the eaglet
 callow
 Needs a parent's pinion-push to quit the eyrie's edge:
 But once fairly launched forth, denizen of æther,
 While each effort sunward bids the blood more
 freely through each limb pulse,

Sure the parent feels, as gay they soar together,
Fully are all pains repaid when love redeems its
pledge!" 160

Then did Peter's tristful visage lighten somewhat,
Vent a watery smile as though inveterate mistrust
were thawing.
"Well, who knows?" he slow broke silence. "Mortals — come what
Come there may — are still the dupes of hope
there's luck in store.
Many scholars seek me, promise mounts and marvels:
Here stand I to witness how they step 'twixt me
and clapperclawing!
Dry bread, — that I've gained me: truly I should
starve else:
But of milk, no drop was mine! Well, shuffle cards
once more!"

At the word of promise thus implied, our stranger —
What can he but cast his arms, in rapture of embrace,
round Peter? 170
"Hold! I choke!" the mage grunts. "Shall I in
the manger
Any longer play the dog? Approach, my calf, and
feed!
Bene . . . won't you wait for grace?" But sudden
incense
Wool-white, serpent-solid, curled up — perfume
growing sweet and sweeter
Till it reached the young man's nose and seemed to
win sense
Soul and all from out his brain through nostril: yes,
indeed?

Presently the young man rubbed his eyes. "Where am I?"

Too much bother over books! Some reverie has proved amusing.

What did Peter prate of? 'Faith, my brow is clammy!

How my head throbs, how my heart thumps! Can it be I swooned? 180

Oh, I spoke my speech out — cribbed from Plato's tractate,

Dosed him with 'the Fair Good,' swore — Dog of Egypt — I was choosing

Plato's way to serve men! What's the hour? Exact eight!

Home now, and to-morrow never mind how Plato mooned!

"Peter has the secret! Fair and Good are products

(So he said) of Foul and Evil: one must bring to pass the other.

Just as poisons grow drugs, steal through sundry odd ducts

Doctors name, and ultimately issue safe and changed.

You'd abolish poisons, treat disease with dainties

Such as suit the sound and sane? With all such kickshaws vain you pother! 190

Arsenic's the stuff puts force into the faint eyes,

Opium sets the brain to rights — by cark and care deranged.

"What, he's safe within door? — would escape — no question —

Thanks, since thanks and more I owe, and mean to pay in time befitting.

What most presses now is — after night's digestion,
Peter, of thy precepts! — promptest practice of
the same.

Let me see! The wise man, first of all, scorns
riches:

But to scorn them must obtain them: none believes
in his permitting

Gold to lie ungathered: who picks up, then pitches
Gold away — philosophizes: none disputes his
claim. 200

“So with worldly honors: 't is by abdicating,
Incontestably he proves he could have kept the
crown discarded.

Sulla cuts a figure, leaving off dictating:
Simpletons laud private life? ‘The grapes are sour,’
laugh we.

So, again — but why continue? All's tumultuous
Here: my head's a-whirl with knowledge. Speedily
shall be rewarded

He who taught me! Greeks prove ingrates? So
insult you us?

When your teaching bears its first-fruits, Peter —
wait and see!”

As the word, the deed proved; ere a brief year's
passage,

Fop — that fool he made the jokes on — now he
made the jokes for, *gratis*: 210

Hunks — that hoarder, long left lonely in his crass
age —

Found now one appreciative deferential friend:
Powder-paint-and-patch, Hag Jezebel — recovered,
Strange to say, the power to please, got courtship
till she cried *Jam satis!*

Fop be-flattered, Hunks be-friended, Hag be-
loved —
Nobody o'erlooked, save God — he soon attained
his end.

As he lounged at ease one morning in his villa,
(Hag's the dowry) estimated (Hunks' bequest) his
coin in coffer,
Mused on how a fool's good word (Fop's word)
could fill a
Social circle with his praise, promote him man of
mark, —
All at once — "An old friend fain would see your
Highness!"
There stood Peter, skeleton and scarecrow, plain
writ *Phi-lo-so-pher*
In the woe-worn face — for yellowness and dry-
ness,
Parchment — with a pair of eyes — one hope their
feeble spark.

"Did I counsel rightly? Have you, in accordance,
Prospered greatly, dear my pupil? Sure, at just
the stage I find you,
When your hand may draw me forth from the mad
war-dance
Savages are leading round your master — down,
not dead.
Padua wants to burn me: balk them, let me
linger
Life out — rueful though its remnant — hid in
some safe hole behind you!
Prostrate here I lie: quick, help with but a finger
Lest I house in safety's self — a tombstone o'er my
head!

"Lodging, bite and sup, with — now and then —
 a copper
 — Alms for any poorer still, if such there be, — is
 all my asking.
 Take me for your bedesman, — nay, if you think
 proper,
 Menial merely, — such my perfect passion for re-
 pose!
 Yes, from out your plenty Peter craves a pittance
 — Leave to thaw his frozen hands before the fire
 whereat you 're basking!
 Double though your debt were, grant this boon —
 remittance
 He proclaims of obligation: 't is himself that
 owes!"

240

"Venerated Master — can it be, such treatment
 Learning meets with, magic fails to guard you from,
 by all appearance?
 Strange! for, as you entered, — what the famous
 feat meant,
 I was full of, — why you reared that fabric, Padua's
 boast.
 Nowise for man's pride, man's pleasure, did you
 slyly
 Raise it, but man's seat of rule whereby the world
 should soon have clearance
 (Happy world) from such a rout as now so vilely
 Handles you — and hampers me, for which I grieve
 the most.

"Since if it got wind you now were my familiar,
 How could I protect you — nay, defend myself
 against the rabble?
 Wait until the mob, now masters, willy-nilly are

250

Servants as they should be: then has gratitude full
play!

Surely this experience shows how unbecoming
'T is that minds like mine should rot in ease and
plenty. Geese may gabble,

Gorge, and keep the ground: but swans are soon
for quitting

Earthly fare — as fain would I, your swan, if
taught the way.

“Teach me, then, to rule men, have them at my
pleasure!

Solely for their good, of course, — impart a secret
worth rewarding,

Since the proper life's-prize! Tantalus's treasure
Aught beside proves, vanishes and leaves no trace
at all. 200

Wait awhile, nor press for payment prematurely!
Over-haste defrauds you. Thanks! since, — even
while I speak, — discarding

Sloth and vain delights, I learn how — swiftly,
surely —

Magic sways the sceptre, wears the crown and
wields the ball!

“Gone again — what, is he? 'Faith, he's soon dis-
posed of!

Peter's precepts work already, put within my lump
their leaven!

Ay, we needs must don glove would we pluck the
rose — doff

Silken garment would we climb the tree and take
its fruit.

Why sharp thorn, rough rind? To keep unvio-
lated

Either prize? We garland us, we mount from earth
to feast in heaven, 270
Just because exist what once we estimated
Hindrances which, better taught, as helps we now
compute.

“Foolishly I turned disgusted from my fellows!
Pits of ignorance — to fill, and heaps of prejudice —
to level —
Multitudes in motley, whites and blacks and
yellows —
What a hopeless task it seemed to discipline the
host!
Now I see my error. Vices act like virtues
— Not alone because they guard — sharp thorns —
the rose we first dishevel,
Not because they scrape, scratch — rough rind —
through the dirt-shoes
Bare feet cling to bole with, while the half-mooned
boot we boast. 280

“No, my aim is nobler, more disinterested!
Man shall keep what seemed to thwart him, since
it proves his true assistance,
Leads to ascertaining which head is the best
head,
Would he crown his body, rule its members — law-
less else.
Ignorant the horse stares, by deficient vision
Takes a man to be a monster, lets him mount,
then, twice the distance
Horse could trot unriden, gallops — dream Ely-
sian! —
Dreaming that his dwarfish guide’s a giant, —
jockeys tell ’s.”

Brief, so worked the spell, he promptly had a rid-
 dance:
 Heart and brain no longer felt the pricks which
 passed for conscience-scruples: 200
 Free henceforth his feet, — *Per Bacco*, how they
 did dance
 Merrily through lets and checks that stopped the
 way before!
 Politics the prize now, — such adroit adviser,
 Opportune suggester, with the tact that triples and
 quadruples
 Merit in each measure, — never did the Kaiser
 Boast a subject such a statesman, friend, something
 more!

As he, up and down, one noonday, paced his closet
 — Council o'er, each spark (his hint) blown flame,
 by colleagues' breath applauded,
 Strokes of statecraft hailed with "*Salomo si nôsset!*"
 (His the nostrum) — every throw for luck come
 double-six, — 300
 As he, pacing, hugged himself in satisfaction,
 Thump — the door went. "What, the Kaiser? By
 none else were I defrauded
 Thus of well-earned solace. Since 't is fate's exac-
 tion, —
 Enter, Liege my Lord! Ha, Peter, you here?
Teneor vix!"

"Ah, Sir, none the less, contain you, nor wax
 irate!
 You so lofty, I so lowly, — vast the space which
 yawns between us!
 Still, methinks, you — more than ever — at a high
 rate

Needs must prize poor Peter's secret since it lifts you
thus.

Grant me now the boon whereat before you
boggled!

Ten long years your march has moved — one tri-
umph — (though *e*'s short) — *hactenus*, 310

While I down and down disastrously have joggled
Till I pitch against Death's door, the true *Nec Ultra
Plus*.

"Years ago — some ten 't is — since I sought for
shelter,

Craved in your whole house a closet, out of all your
means a comfort.

Now you soar above these: as is gold to spelter
So is power — you urged with reason — paramount
to wealth.

Power you boast in plenty: let it grant me refuge!
Houserom now is out of question: find for me some
stronghold — some fort —

Privacy wherein, immured, shall this blind deaf
huge

Monster of a mob let stay the soul I'd save by
stealth! 320

"Ay, for all too much with magic have I tampered!
— Lost the world, and gained, I fear, a certain place
I'm to describe loth!

Still, if prayer and fasting tame the pride long pam-
pered,

Mercy may be mine: amendment never comes too
late.

How can I amend beset by cursers, kickers?

Pluck this brand from out the burning! Once
away, I take my Bible-oath,

Never more — so long as life's weak lamp-flame
flickers —

No, not once I'll tease you, but in silence bear my
fate!"

"Gently, good my Genius, Oracle unerring!
Strange now! can you guess on what — as in you
peeped — it was I pondered? 330

You and I are both of one mind in preferring
Power to wealth, but — here's the point — what
sort of power, I ask?

Ruling men is vulgar, easy and ignoble:
Rid yourself of conscience, quick you have at beck
and call the fond herd.

But who wields the crozier, down may fling the
crow-bill:

That's the power I covet now; soul's sway o'er souls
— my task!

"'Well but,' you object, 'you have it, who by
glamour

Dress up lies to look like truths, mask folly in the
garb of reason:

Your soul acts on theirs, sure, when the people
clamor,

Hold their peace, now fight now fondle, — ear-
wiggled through the brains.' 340

Possibly! but still the operation's mundane,
Grosser than a taste demands which — craving
manna — kecks at peason —

Power o'er men by wants material: why should one
deign

Rule by sordid hopes and fears — a grunt for all
one's pains?

"No, if men must praise me, let them praise to purpose!

Would we move the world, not earth but heaven
must be our fulcrum — *pou sto!*

Thus I seek to move it: Master, why intèrpose —
Balk my climbing close on what 's the ladder's top-
most round?

Statecraft 't is I step from: when by priestcraft
hoisted

Up to where my foot may touch the highest rung
which fate allows toe, 350

Then indeed ask favor! On you shall be foisted
Nò excuse: I'll pay my debt, each penny of the
pound!

"Ho, my knaves without there! Lead this worthy
downstairs!

No farewell, good Paul — nay, Peter — what 's
your name remembered rightly?

Come, he's humble: out another would have
flounced — airs

Suitors often give themselves when our sort bow
them forth.

Did I touch his rags? He surely kept his distance:
Yet, there somehow passed to me from him —
where'er the virtue might lie —

Something that inspires my soul — Oh, by assistance
Doubtlessly of Peter! — still, he's worth just what
he's worth! 360

"'T is my own soul soars now: soaring — how? By
crawling!

I'll to Rome, before Rome's feet the temporal-
supreme lay prostrate!

'Hands' (I'll say) 'proficient once in pulling, hauling

This and that way men as I was minded — feet
now clasp!’

Ay, the Kaiser’s self has wrung them in his fervor!
Now — they only sue to slave for Rome, nor at one
doit the cost rate.

Rome’s adopted child — no bone, no muscle, nerve or
Sinew of me but I’ll strain, though out my life I
gasp!”

As he stood one evening proudly — (he had trav-
ersed

Rome on horseback — peerless pageant! — claimed
the Lateran as new Pope) — 370

Thinking “All’s attained now! Pontiff! Who
could have erst

Dreamed of my advance so far when, some ten
years ago,

I embraced devotion, grew from priest to bishop,
Gained the Purple, bribed the Conclave, got the
Two-thirds, saw my coop ope,

Came out — what Rome hails me! O were there a
wish-shop,

Not one wish more would I purchase — lord of all
below!

“Ha! — who dares intrude now — puts aside the
arras?

What, old Peter, here again, at such a time, in such
a presence?

Satan sends this plague back merely to embarrass
Me who enter on my office — little needing you!

’Faith, I’m touched myself by age, but you look
Tithon! 381

Were it vain to seek of you the sole prize left —
rejuvenescence?

Well, since flesh is grass which Time must lay his
scythe on,
Say your say and so depart and make no more ado!"

Peter faltered — coughing first by way of prologue—
"Holiness, your help comes late: a death at ninety
little matters.

Padua, build poor Peter's pyre now, on log roll log,
Burn away — I've lived my day! Yet here's the
sting in death —

I've an author's pride: I want my Book's survival:
See, I've hid it in my breast to warm me mid the
rags and tatters! 390

Save it — tell next age your Master had no rival!
Scholar's debt discharged in full, be 'Thanks' my
latest breath!"

"Faugh, the frowsy bundle — scribblings harum-
scarum

Scattered o'er a dozen sheepskins! What's the
name of this farrago?

Ha — '*Conciliator Differentiarum*' —

Man and book may burn together, cause the world
no loss!

Stop — what else? A tractate — eh, '*De Speciebus
Ceremonialis Ma-gi-æ?*' I dream sure! Hence,
away, go,

Wizard, — quick avoid me! Vain you clasp my
knee, buss

Hand that bears the Fisher's ring or foot that boasts
the Cross! 400

"Help! The old magician clings like an octopus!
Ah, you rise now — fuming, fretting, frowning, if
I read your features!

Frown, who cares? We 're Pope — once Pope, you
can't unpope us!

Good — you muster up a smile: that 's better! Still
so brisk?

All at once grown youthful? But the case is plain!
Ass —

Here I dally with the fiend, yet know the Word —
compels all creatures

Earthly, heavenly, hellish. *Apage, Sathanas*
Dicam verbum Salomonis — ” “ — *dicite!*” When
— whisk! —

What was changed? The stranger gave his eyes a
rubbing:

There smiled Peter's face turned back a moment at
him o'er the shoulder, 410

As the black door shut, bang! “So he 'scapes a
drubbing!”

(Quoth a boy who, unespied, had stopped to hear
the talk.)

“That's the way to thank these wizards when
they bid men

Benedicite! What ails you? You, a man, and yet
no bolder?

Foreign Sir, you look but foolish!” “*Idmen, idmen!*”

Groaned the Greek. “O' Peter, cheese at last I
know from chalk!”

Peter lived his life out, menaced yet no martyr,
Knew himself the mighty man he was — such knowl-
edge all his guerdon,

Left the world a big book — people but in part err
When they style a true *Scientiæ Com-pen-di-um*:

“*Admiratorem incutit*” they sourly 421

Smile, as fast they shut the folio which myself was
somehow spurred on

Once to ope: but love — life's milk which daily,
hourly,
Blockheads lap — O Peter, still thy taste of love's
to come!

Greek, was your ambition likewise doomed to
failure?

True, I find no record you wore purple, walked
with axe and fasces,

Played some antipope's part: still, friend, don't
turn tail, you're

Certain, with but these two gifts, to gain earth's
prize in time!

Cleverness uncurbed by conscience — if you ran-
sacked

Peter's book you'd find no potent spell like these
to rule the masses; 430

Nor should want example, had I not to transact
Other business. Go your ways, you'll thrive! So
ends my rhyme.

When these parts Tiberius — not yet Cæsar —
travelled,

Passing Padua, he consulted Padua's Oracle of
Geryon

(God three-headed, thrice wise) just to get unravelled
Certain tangles of his future. "Fling at Abano

Golden dice," it answered: "dropt within the fount
there,

Note what sum the pips present!" And still we see
each die, the very one,

Turn up, through the crystal, — read the whole
account there

Where 't is told by Suetonius, — each its highest
throw. 440

Scarce the sportive fancy-dice I fling show "Venus:"
Still — for love of that dear land which I so oft in
dreams revisit —

I have — oh, not sung! but lilted (as — between
us —

Grows my lazy custom) this its legend. What the
lilt?



DOCTOR —

A RABBI told me: On the day allowed
Satan for carping at God's rule, he came,
Fresh from our earth, to brave the angel-crowd.

"What is the fault now?" "This I find to blame:
Many and various are the tongues below,
Yet all agree in one speech, all proclaim

"Hell has no might to match what earth can show:
Death is the strongest-born of Hell, and yet
Stronger than Death is a Bad Wife, we know."

"Is it a wonder if I fume and fret — 10
Robbed of my rights, since Death am I, and mine
The style of Strongest? Men pay Nature's debt

"Because they must at my demand; decline
To pay it henceforth surely men will please,
Provided husbands with bad wives combine

“To baffle Death. Judge between me and these!”
 “Thyself shalt judge. Descend to earth in shape
 Of mortal, marry, drain from froth to lees

“The bitter draught, then see if thou escape
 Concluding, with men sorrowful and sage, 20
 A Bad Wife’s strength Death’s self in vain would
 ape!”

How Satan entered on his pilgrimage,
 Conformed himself to earthly ordinance,
 Wived and played husband well from youth to age

Intrepidly — I leave untold, advance
 Through many a married year until I reach
 A day when — of his father’s countenance

The very image, like him too in speech
 As well as thought and deed, — the union’s fruit
 Attained maturity. “I needs must teach 30

“My son a trade: but trade, such son to suit,
 Needs seeking after. He a man of war?
 Too cowardly! A lawyer wins repute —

“Having to toil and moil, though — both which are
 Beyond this sluggard. There’s Divinity:
 No, that’s my own bread-winner — that be far

“From my poor offspring! Physic? Ha, we’ll try
 If this be practicable. Where’s my wit?
 Asleep? — since, now I come to think . . . Ay, ay!

“Hither, my son! Exactly have I hit 40
 On a profession for thee. *Medicus* —
 Behold, thou art appointed! Yea, I spit

“Upon thine eyes, bestow a virtue thus
That henceforth not this human form I wear
Shalt thou perceive alone, but — one of us

“By privilege — thy fleshly sight shall bear
Me in my spirit-person as I walk
The world and take my prey appointed there.

“Doctor once dubbed — what ignorance shall balk
Thy march triumphant? Diagnose the gout 50
As colic, and prescribe it cheese for chalk —

“No matter! All’s one: cure shall come about
And win thee wealth — fees paid with such a roar
Of thanks and praise alike from lord and lout

“As never stunned man’s ears on earth before.
‘How may this be?’ Why, that’s my sceptic! Soon
Truth will corrupt thee, soon thou doubt’st no more!

“Why is it I bestow on thee the boon
Of recognizing me the while I go
Invisibly among men, morning, noon 60

“And night, from house to house, and — quick or
slow —
Take my appointed prey? They summon thee
For help, suppose: obey the summons! so!

“Enter, look round! Where’s Death? Know — I
am he,
Satan who work all evil: I who bring
Pain to the patient in whate’er degree.

“I then, am there: first glance thine eye shall fling
Will find me — whether distant or at hand,
As I am free to do my spiriting.

“At such mere first glance thou shalt understand 70
Wherefore I reach no higher up the room
Than door or window, when my form is scanned.

“Howe'er friends' faces please to gather gloom,
Bent o'er the sick, — howe'er himself desponds, —
In such case Death is not the sufferer's doom.

“Contrariwise, do friends rejoice my bonds
Are broken, does the captive in his turn
Crow 'Life shall conquer'? Nip these foolish fronds

“Of hope a-sprout, if haply thou discern
Me at the head — my victim's head, be sure! 80
Forth now! This taught thee, little else to learn!”

And forth he went. Folk heard him ask demure
“How do you style this ailment? (There he peeps,
My father, through the arras!) Sirs, the cure

“Is plain as A. B. C.! Experience steps
Blossoms of pennyroyal half an hour
In sherris. *Sumat!* — Lo, how sound he sleeps —

“The subject you presumed was past the power
Of Galen to relieve!” Or else “How 's this?
Why call for help so tardily? Clouds lour 90

“Portentously indeed, Sirs! (Naught 's amiss:
He 's at the bed-foot merely.) Still, the storm
May pass averted — not by quacks, I wis,

“Like you, my masters! You, forsooth, perform
A miracle? Stand, sciolists, aside!
Blood, ne'er so cold, at ignorance grows warm!”

Which boasting by result was justified,
Big as might words be: whether drugged or left
Drugless, the patient always lived, not died.

Great the heir's gratitude, so nigh bereft 100
Of all he prized in this world: sweet the smile
Of disconcerted rivals: "Cure? — say, theft

"From Nature in despite of Art — so style
This off-hand kill-or-cure work! You did much,
I had done more: folk cannot wait awhile!"

But did the case change? was it — "Scarcely such
The symptoms as to warrant our recourse
To your skill, Doctor! Yet since just a touch

"Of pulse, a taste of breath, has all the force
With you of long investigation claimed 110
By others, — tracks an ailment to its source

"Intuitively, — may we ask unblamed
What from this pimple you prognosticate?"
"Death!" was the answer, as he saw and named

The coucher by the sick man's head. "Too late
You send for my assistance. I am bold
Only by Nature's leave, and bow to Fate!

"Besides, you have my rivals: lavish gold!
How comfortably quick shall life depart
Cosseted by attentions manifold! 120

"One day, one hour ago, perchance my art
Had done some service. Since you have yourselves
Chosen — before the horse — to put the cart,

“Why, Sirs, the sooner that the sexton delves
Your patient’s grave, the better! How you stare
— Shallow, for all the deep books on your shelves!

“Fare you well, fumblers!” Do I need declare
What name and fame, what riches recompensed
The Doctor’s practice? Never anywhere

Such an adept as daily evidenced 130
Each new vaticination! Oh, not he
Like dolts who dallied with their scruples, fenced

With subterfuge, nor gave out frank and free
Something decisive! If he said “I save
The patient,” saved he was: if “Death will be

“His portion,” you might count him dead. Thus
brave,
Behold our worthy, sans competitor
Throughout the country, on the architrave

Of Glory’s temple golden-lettered for
Machaon *redivivus*! So, it fell 140
That, of a sudden, when the Emperor

Was smit by sore disease, I need not tell
If any other Doctor’s aid was sought
To come and forthwith make the sick Prince well.

“He will reward thee as a monarch ought.
Not much imports the malady; but then,
He clings to life and cries like one distraught

“For thee — who, from a simple citizen,
Mayst look to rise in rank, — nay, haply wear
A medal with his portrait, — always when 150

"Recovery is quite accomplished. There!
Pass to the presence!" Hardly has he crossed
The chamber's threshold when he halts, aware

Of who stands sentry by the head. All 's lost.
"Sire, naught avails my art: you near the goal,
And end the race by giving up the ghost."

"How?" cried the monarch: "Names upon your
roll
Of half my subjects rescued by your skill —
Old and young, rich and poor — crowd cheek by
jowl

"And yet no room for mine? Be saved I will! 160
Why else am I earth's foremost potentate?
Add me to these and take as fee your fill

"Of gold — that point admits of no debate
Between us: save me, as you can and must, —
Gold, till your gown's pouch cracks beneath the
weight!"

This touched the Doctor. "Truly a home-thrust,
Parent, you will not parry! Have I dared
Entreat that you forego the meal of dust

" — Man that is snake's meat — when I saw pre-
pared
Your daily portion? Never! Just this once, 170
Go from his head, then, — let his life be spared!"

Whisper met whisper in the gruff response
"Fool, I must have my prey: no inch I budge
From where thou see'st me thus myself ensconce."

“Ah,” moaned the sufferer, “by thy look I judge
Wealth fails to tempt thee: what if honors prove
More efficacious? Naught to him I grudge

“Who saves me. Only keep my head above
The cloud that ’s creeping round it — I ’ll divide
My empire with thee! No? What ’s left but —
love? 180

“Does love allure thee! Well then, take as ’bride
My only daughter, fair beyond belief!
Save me — to-morrow shall the knot be tied!”

“Father, you hear him! Respite ne’er so brief
Is all I beg: go now and come again
Next day, for aught I care: respect the grief

“Mine will be if thy first-born sues in vain!”
“Fool, I must have my prey!” was all he got
In answer. But a fancy crossed his brain.

“I have it! Sire, methinks a meteor shot 190
Just now across the heavens and neutralized
Jove’s salutary influence: ’neath the blot

“Plumb are you placed now: well that I surmised
The cause of failure! Knaves, reverse the bed!”
“Stay!” groaned the monarch, “I shall be capsized—

“Jolt — jolt — my heels uplift where late my head
Was lying — sure I ’m turned right round at last!
What do you say now, Doctor?” Naught he said:

For why? With one brisk leap the Antic passed
From couch-foot back to pillow, — as before, 200
Lord of the situation. Long aghast

The Doctor gazed, then "Yet one trial more
Is left me" inwardly he uttered. "Shame
Upon thy flinty heart! Do I implore

"This trifling favor in the idle name
Of mercy to the moribund? I plead
The cause of all thou dost affect: my aim

"Befits my author! Why would I succeed?
Simply that by success I may promote 230
The growth of thy pet virtues — pride and greed.

"But keep thy favors! — curse thee! I devote
Henceforth my service to the other side.
No time to lose: the rattle's in his throat.

"So, — not to leave one last resource untried, —
Run to my house with all haste, somebody!
Bring me that knobstick, so often plied

"With profit by the astrologer — shall I
Disdain its help, the mystic Jacob's-Staff?
Sire, do but have the courage not to die

"Till this arrive! Let none of you dare laugh! 230
Though rugged its exterior, I have seen
That implement work wonders, send the chaff

"Quick and thick flying from the wheat — I mean,
By metaphor, a human sheaf it thrashed
Flail-like. Go fetch it! Or — a word between

"Just you and me, friend! — go bid, unabashed,
My mother, whom you'll find there, bring the stick
Herself — herself, mind!" Out the lackey dashed

Zealous upon the errand. Craft and trick
 Are meat and drink to Satan: and he grinned 230
 — How else? — at an excuse so politic

For failure: scarce would Jacob's-Staff rescind
 Fate's firm decree! And ever as he neared
 The agonizing one, his breath like wind

Froze to the marrow, while his eye-flash seared
 Sense in the brain up: closelier and more close
 Pressing his prey, when at the door appeared

— Who but his Wife the Bad? Whereof one dose,
 One grain, one mite of the medicament, 239
 Sufficed him. Up he sprang. One word, too gross

To soil my lips with, — and through ceiling went
 Somehow the Husband. "That a storm's dispersed
 We know for certain, by the sulphury scent!

"Hail to the Doctor! Who but one so versed
 In all Dame Nature's secrets had prescribed
 The staff thus opportunely? Style him first

"And foremost of physicians!" "I've imbibed
 Elixir surely," smiled the prince, — "have gained
 New lease of life. Dear Doctor, how you bribed 249

"Death to forego me, boots not: you've obtained
 My daughter and her dowry. Death, I've heard,
 Was still on earth the strongest power that reigned,

"Except a Bad Wife!" Whereunto demurred
 Nowise the Doctor, so refused the fee
 — No dowry, no bad wife!

“You think absurd
 This tale?” — the Rabbi added: “True, our Tal-
 mud
 Boasts sundry such: yet — have our elders erred
 In thinking there ’s some water there, not all mud?”
 I tell it, as the Rabbi told it me.

PAN AND LUNA

Si credere dignum est. — *Georgic.* iii. 390

O WORTHY of belief I hold it was,
 Virgil, your legend in those strange three lines!
 No question, that adventure came to pass
 One black night in Arcadia: yes, the pines,
 Mountains and valleys mingling made one mass
 Of black with void black heaven: the earth’s con-
 fines,
 The sky’s embrace, — below, above, around,
 All hardened into black without a bound.

Fill up a swart stone chalice to the brim
 With fresh-squeezed yet fast-thickening poppy-
 juice: 10

See how the sluggish jelly, late a-swim,
 Turns marble to the touch of who would loose
 The solid smooth, grown jet from rim to rim,
 By turning round the bowl! So night can fuse
 Earth with her all-comprising sky. No less,
 Light, the least spark, shows air and emptiness.

And thus it proved when — diving into space,
 Stript of all vapor, from each web of mist
 Utterly film-free — entered on her race
 The naked Moon, full-orbed antagonist 20

Of night and dark, night's dowry: peak to base,
 Upstarted mountains, and each valley, kissed
 To sudden life, lay silver-bright: in air
 Flew she revealed, Maid-Moon with limbs all bare.

Still as she fled, each depth — where refuge seemed —
 Opening a lone pale chamber, left distinct
 Those limbs: mid still-retreating blue, she teemed
 Herself with whiteness, — virginal, uncinct
 By any halo save what finely gleamed
 To outline not disguise her: heaven was linked 30
 In one accord with earth to quaff the joy,
 Drain beauty to the dregs without alloy.

Whereof she grew aware. What help? When, lo,
 A succorable cloud with sleep lay dense:
 Some pine-tree-top had caught it sailing slow,
 And tethered for a prize: in evidence
 Captive lay fleece on fleece of piled-up snow
 Drowsily patient: flake-heaped how or whence,
 The structure of that succorable cloud 30
 What matter? Shamed she plunged into its shroud.

Orbed — so the woman-figure poets call
 Because of rounds on rounds — that apple-shaped
 Head which its hair binds close into a ball
 Each side the curving ears — that pure undraped
 Pout of the sister paps — that . . . Once for all,
 Say — her consummate circle thus escaped
 With its innumerable circlets, sank absorbed,
 Safe in the cloud — O naked Moon full-orbed!

But what means this? The downy swathes combine
 Conglobe, the smothery coy-caressing stuff 30
 Curdles about her! Vain each twist and twine
 Those lithe limbs try, encroached on by a fluff

Fitting as close as fits the dented spine
 Its flexile ivory outside-flesh: enough!
 The plummy drifts contract, condense, constringe,
 Till she is swallowed by the feathery springe.

As when a pearl slips lost in the thin foam
 Churned on a sea-shore, and, o'er-frothed, conceits
 Herself safe-housed in Amphitrite's dome, —
 If, through the bladdery wave-worked yeast, she
 meets 60
 What most she loathes and leaps from, — elf from
 gnome
 No gladlier, — finds that safest of retreats
 Bubble about a treacherous hand wide ope
 To grasp her — (divers who pick pearls so grope) —

So lay this Maid-Moon clasped around and caught
 By rough red Pan, the god of all that tract:
 He it was schemed the snare thus subtly wrought
 With simulated earth-breath, — wool-tufts packed
 Into a billowy wrappage. Sheep far-sought
 For spotless shearings yield such: take the fact 70
 As learned Virgil gives it, — how the breed
 Whitens itself forever: yes, indeed!

If one forefather ran, though pure as chalk
 From tinge on fleece, should still display a tongue
 Black 'neath the beast's moist palate, prompt men
 balk
 The propagating plague: he gets no young:
 They rather slay him, — sell his hide to calk
 Ships with, first steeped in pitch, — nor hands are
 wrung
 In sorrow for his fate: protected thus,
 The purity we love is gained for us. 80

So did Girl-moon, by just her attribute
 Of unmatched modesty betrayed, lie trapped,
 Bruised to the breast of Pan, half-god half-brute,
 Raked by his bristly boar-sword while he lapped
 — Never say, kissed her! that were to pollute
 Love's language — which moreover proves unapt
 To tell how she recoiled — as who finds thorns
 Where she sought flowers — when, feeling, she
 touched — horns!

Then — does the legend say? — first moon-eclipse
 Happened, first swooning-fit which puzzled sore 90
 The early sages? Is that why she dips
 Into the dark, a minute and no more,
 Only so long as serves her while she rips
 The cloud's womb through and, faultless as be-
 fore,
 Pursues her way? No lesson for a maid
 Left she, a maid herself thus trapped, betrayed?

Ha, Virgil? Tell the rest, you! "To the deep
 Of his domain the wildwood, Pan forthwith
 Called her, and so she followed" — in her sleep, 99
 Surely? — "by no means spurning him." The myth
 Explain who may! Let all else go, I keep
 — As of a ruin just a monolith —
 Thus much, one verse of five words, each a boon:
 Arcadia, night, a cloud, Pan, and the moon.

"TOUCH him ne'er so lightly, into song he broke:
 Soil so quick-receptive, — not one feather-seed,
 Not one flower-dust fell but straight its fall awoke
 Vitalizing virtue: song would song succeed
 Sudden as spontaneous — prove a poet-soul!"

Indeed?

Rock's the song-soil rather, surface hard and bare:
Sun and dew their mildness, storm and frost their
rage

Vainly both expend, — few flowers awaken there:
Quiet in its cleft broods — what the after age
Knows and names a pine, a nation's heritage. 10

JOCOSERIA

1883

WANTING is — what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
— Where is the blot?

Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
— Framework which waits for a picture to frame:
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering with naught they embower!
Come then, complete incomplection, O comer,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer! 10
Breathe but one breath
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love!

DONALD

“WILL you hear my story also,
— Huge Sport, brave adventure in plenty?”
The boys were a band from Oxford,
The oldest of whom was twenty.

The bothy we held carouse in
Was bright with fire and candle;
Tale followed tale like a merry-go-round
Whereof Sport turned the handle.

In our eyes and noses — turf-smoke:
 In our ears a tune from the trivet, 10
 Whence "Boiling, boiling," the kettle sang,
 "And ready for fresh Glenlivet."

So, feat capped feat, with a vengeance:
 Truths, though, — the lads were loyal:
 "Grouse, five score brace to the bag!
 Deer, ten hours' stalk of the Royal!"

Of boasting, not one bit, boys!
 Only there seemed to settle
 Somehow above your curly heads,
 — Plain through the singing kettle, 20

Palpable through the cloud,
 As each new-puffed Havanna
 Rewarded the teller's well-told tale, —
 This vaunt "To Sport — Hosanna!"

"Hunt, fish, shoot,
 Would a man fulfil life's duty!
 Not to the bodily frame alone
 Does Sport give strength and beauty,

"But character gains in — courage?
 Ay, Sir, and much beside it! 30
 You don't sport, more 's the pity:
 You soon would find, if you tried it,

"Good sportsman means good fellow,
 Sound-hearted he, to the centre;
 Your mealy-mouthed mild milksops
 — There's where the rot can enter!

“There’s where the dirt will breed,
 The shabbiness Sport would banish!
 Oh no, Sir, no! In your honored case
 All such objections vanish.

40

“’T is known how hard you studied:
 A Double-First — what, the jigger!
 Give me but half your Latin and Greek,
 I’ll never again touch trigger!

“Still, tastes are tastes, allow me!
 Allow, too, where there’s keenness
 For Sport, there’s little likelihood
 Of a man’s displaying meanness!”

So, put on my mettle, I interposed.

“Will you hear my story?” quoth I.
 “Never mind how long since it happed,
 I sat, as we sit, in a bothy;

50

“With as merry a band of mates, too,
 Undergrads all on a level:
 (One’s a Bishop, one’s gone to the Bench,
 And one’s gone — well, to the Devil.)

“When, lo, a scratching and tapping!
 In hobbled a ghastly visitor.
 Listen to just what he told us himself
 — No need of our playing inquisitor!”

60

Do you happen to know in Ross-shire
 Mount . . . Ben . . . but the namescarce matters:
 Of the naked fact I am sure enough,
 Though I clothe it in rags and tatters.

You may recognize Ben by description;
 Behind him — a moor's immenseness:
 Up goes the middle mount of a range,
 Fringed with its firs in denseness.

Rimming the edge, its fir-fringe, mind!
 For an edge there is, though narrow; 70
 From end to end of the range, a stripe
 Of path runs straight as an arrow.

And the mountaineer who takes that path
 Saves himself miles of journey
 He has to plod if he crosses the moor
 Through heather, peat and burnie.

But a mountaineer he needs must be,
 For, look you, right in the middle
 Projects bluff Ben — with an end in *ich* —
 Why planted there, is a riddle: 80

Since all Ben's brothers little and big
 Keep rank, set shoulder to shoulder,
 And only this burliest out must bulge
 Till it seems — to the beholder

From down in the gully, — as if Ben's breast
 To a sudden spike diminished,
 Would signify to the boldest foot
 "All further passage finished!"

Yet the mountaineer who sidles on
 And on to the very bending, 90
 Discovers, if heart and brain be proof,
 No necessary ending.

Foot up, foot down, to the turn abrupt
 Having trod, he, there arriving,
 Finds — what he took for a point was breadth,
 A mercy of Nature's contriving.

So, he rounds what, when 't is reached, proves
 straight,
 From one side gains the other:
 The wee path widens — resume the march,
 And he foils you, Ben my brother! 100

But Donald — (that name, I hope, will do) —
 I wrong him if I call "foiling"
 The tramp of the callant, whistling the while
 As blithe as our kettle's boiling.

He had dared the danger from boyhood up,
 And now, — when perchance was waiting
 A lass at the brig below, — 'twixt mount
 And moor would he stand debating?

Moreover this Donald was twenty-five,
 A glory of bone and muscle: 110
 Did a fiend dispute the right of way,
 Donald would try a tussle.

Lightly marched he out of the broad
 On to the narrow and narrow;
 A step more, rounding the angular rock,
 Reached the front straight as an arrow.

He stepped it, safe on the ledge he stood,
 When — whom found he full-facing?
 What fellow in courage and wariness too,
 Had scouted ignoble pacing, 120

And left low safety to timid mates,
 And made for the dread dear danger,
 And gained the height where — who could guess
 He would meet with a rival ranger?

'T was a gold-red stag that stood and stared,
 Gigantic and magnific,
 By the wonder — ay, and the peril — struck
 Intelligent and pacific:

For a red deer is no fallow deer
 Grown cowardly through park-feeding; 130
 He batters you like a thunderbolt
 If you brave his haunts unheeding.

I doubt he could hardly perform *volte-face*
 Had valor advised discretion:
 You may walk on a rope, but to turn on a rope
 No Blondin makes profession.

Yet Donald must turn, would pride permit,
 Though pride ill brooks retiring:
 Each eyed each — mute man, motionless beast —
 Less fearing than admiring. 140

These are the moments when quite new sense,
 To meet some need as novel,
 Springs up in the brain: it inspired resource:
 — “Nor advance nor retreat but — grovel!”

And slowly, surely, never a whit
 Relaxing the steady tension
 Of eye-stare which binds man to beast, —
 By an inch and inch declension,

Sank Donald sidewise down and down:
 Till flat, breast upwards, lying 150
 At his six-foot length, no corpse more still,
 — “If he cross me! The trick ’s worth trying.”

Minutes were an eternity;
 But a new sense was created
 In the stag’s brain too; he resolves! Slow, sure,
 With eye-stare unabated,

Feelingly he extends a foot
 Which tastes the way ere it touches
 Earth’s solid and just escapes man’s soft,
 Nor hold of the same unclutches 160

Till its fellow foot, light as a feather whisk,
 Lands itself no less finely:
 So a mother removes a fly from the face
 Of her babe asleep supinely.

And now ’t is the haunch and hind foot’s turn
 — That’s hard: can the beast quite raise it?
 Yes, traversing half the prostrate length,
 His hoof-tip does not graze it.

Just one more lift! But Donald, you see,
 Was sportsman first, man after: 170
 A fancy lightened his caution through,
 — He well-nigh broke into laughter.

“It were nothing short of a miracle!
 Unrivalled, unexampled —
 All sporting feats with this feat matched
 Were down and dead and trampled!”

The last of the legs as tenderly
 Follows the rest: or never
 Or now is the time! His knife in reach,
 And his right-hand loose — how clever! 180

For this can stab up the stomach's soft,
 While the left-hand grasps the pastern.
 A rise on the elbow, and — now's the time
 Or never: this turn's the last turn!

I shall dare to place myself by God
 Who scanned — for He does — each feature
 Of the face thrown up in appeal to Him
 By the agonizing creature.

Nay, I hear plain words: "Thy gift brings this!"
 Up he sprang, back he staggered, 190
 Over he fell, and with him our friend
 — At following game no laggard.

Yet he was not dead when they picked next day
 From the gully's depth the wreck of him;
 His fall had been stayed by the stag beneath
 Who cushioned and saved the neck of him.

But the rest of his body — why, doctors said,
 Whatever could break was broken;
 Legs, arms, ribs, all of him looked like a toast
 In a tumbler of port-wine soaken. 200

"That your life is left you, thank the stag!"
 Said they when — the slow cure ended —
 They opened the hospital door, and thence
 — Strapped, spliced, main fractures mended.

And minor damage left wisely alone, —
 Like an old shoe clouted and cobbled,
 Out — what went in a Goliath well-nigh, —
 Some half of a David hobbled.

“You must ask an alms from house to house:
 Sell the stag’s head for a bracket, 210
 With its grand twelve tines — I’d buy it myself —
 And use the skin for a jacket!”

He was wiser, made both head and hide
 His win-penny: hands and knees on,
 Would manage to crawl — poor crab — by the roads
 In the misty stalking-season.

And if he discovered a bothy like this,
 Why, harvest was sure: folk listened.
 He told his tale to the lovers of Sport:
 Lips twitched, cheeks glowed, eyes glistened. 220

And when he had come to the close, and spread
 His spoils for the gazers’ wonder,
 With “Gentlemen, here’s the skull of the stag
 I was over, thank God, not under!” —

The company broke out in applause;
 “By Jingo, a lucky cripple!
 Have a munch of grouse and a hunk of bread,
 And a tug, besides, at our tipple!”

And “There’s my pay for your pluck!” cried This,
 “And mine for your jolly story!” 230
 Cried That, while T’ other — but he was drunk —
 Hiccapped “A trump, a Tory!”

I hope I gave twice as much as the rest;
 For, as Homer would say, "within gate
 Though teeth kept tongue," my whole soul growled
 "Rightly rewarded, — Ingrate!"

SOLOMON AND BALKIS

SOLOMON King of the Jews and the Queen of Sheba
 Balkis
 Talk on the ivory throne, and we well may conjecture
 their talk is
 Solely of things sublime: why else has she sought
 Mount Zion,
 Climbed the six golden steps, and sat betwixt lion
 and lion?

She proves him with hard questions: before she has
 reached the middle
 He smiling supplies the end, straight solves them
 riddle by riddle;
 Until, dead-beaten at last, there is left no spirit in
 her,
 And thus would she close the game whereof she was
 first beginner:

"O wisest thou of the wise, world's marvel and
 well-nigh monster,
 One crabbed question more to construe or *vulgo*
 conster!¹⁰
 Who are those, of all mankind, a monarch of perfect
 wisdom
 Should open to, when they knock at *spheteron do* —
 that 's his dome?"

The King makes tart reply: "Whom else but the
 wise his equals
 Should he welcome with heart and voice? — since,
 king though he be, such weak walls
 Of circumstance — power and pomp — divide souls
 each from other
 That whoso proves kingly in craft I needs must
 acknowledge my brother.

"Come poet, come painter, come sculptor, come
 builder — whate'er his condition,
 Is he prime in his art? We are peers! My insight
 has pierced the partition
 And hails — for the poem, the picture, the statue,
 the building — my fellow!
 Gold's gold though dim in the dust: court-polish
 soon turns it yellow. 20

"But tell me in turn, O thou to thy weakling sex
 superior,
 That for knowledge has travelled so far yet seemest
 no whit the wearier, —
 Who are those, of all mankind, a queen like thyself,
 consummate
 In wisdom, should call to her side with an affable
 'Up hither, come, mate!'"

"The Good are my mates — how else? Why doubt
 it?" the Queen upbridled:
 "Sure even above the Wise, — or in travel my eyes
 have idled, —
 I see the Good stand plain: be they rich, poor,
 shrewd or simple,
 If Good they only are. . . . Permit me to drop my
 wimple!"

And in that bashful jerk of her body, she — peace,
 thou scoffer! —
 Jostled the King's right-hand stretched courteously
 help to proffer, 30
 And so disclosed a portent: all unaware the Prince
 eyed
 The Ring which bore the Name — turned outside
 now from inside!

The truth-compelling Name! — and at once “I
 greet the Wise — Oh,
 Certainly welcome such to my court — with this
 proviso:
 The building must be my temple, my person stand
 forth the statue,
 The picture my portrait prove, and the poem my
 praise — you cat, you!”

But Solomon nonplussed? Nay! “Be truthful in
 turn!” so bade he:
 “See the Name, obey its hest!” And at once sub-
 joins the lady
 — “Provided the Good are the young, men strong
 and tall and proper,
 Such servants I straightway enlist, — which
 means . . .” but the blushes stop her. 40

“Ah, Soul,” the Monarch sighed, “that wouldst
 soar yet ever crawlst,
 How comes it thou canst discern the greatest yet
 choose the smallest,
 Unless because heaven is far, where wings find fit
 expansion,
 While creeping on all-fours suits, suffices the earthly
 mansion?”

“Aspire to the Best! But which? There are Bests
 and Bests so many,
 With a *habitat* each for each, earth’s Best as much
 Best as any!
 On Lebanon roots the cedar — soil lofty, yet stony
 and sandy —
 While hyssop, of worth in its way, on the wall
 grows low but handy.

“Above may the Soul spread wing, spurn body and
 sense beneath her;
 Below she must condescend to plodding unbuoyed
 by æther. 50
 In heaven I yearn for knowledge, account all else
 inanity;
 On earth I confess an itch for the praise of fools —
 that’s Vanity.

“It is naught, it will go, it can never presume above
 to trouble me;
 But here, — why, it toys and tickles and teases,
 howe’er I redouble me
 In a doggedest of endeavors to play the indifferent.
 Therefore,
 Suppose we resume discourse? Thou hast travelled
 thus far: but wherefore?”

“Solely for Solomon’s sake, to see whom earth
 styles Sagest?”
 Through her blushes laughed the Queen. “For
 the sake of a Sage? The gay jest!
 On high, be communion with Mind — there, Body
 concerns not Balkis:
 Down here, — do I make too bold? Sage Solomon,
 — one fool’s small kiss!” 60

CRISTINA AND MONALDESCHI

AH, but how each loved each, Marquis!
 Here's the gallery they trod
 Both together, he her god,
 She his idol, — lend your rod,
 Chamberlain! — ay, there they are — "*Quis
 Separabit?*" — plain those two
 Touching words come into view,
 Apposite for me and you:

Since they witness to incessant
 Love like ours: King Francis, he — 10
 Diane the adored one, she —
 Prototypes of you and me.
 Everywhere is carved her Crescent
 With his Salamander-sign —
 Flame-fed creature: flame benign
 To itself or, if malign,

Only to the meddling curious,
 — So, be warned, Sir! Where's my head?
 How it wanders! What I said
 Merely meant — the creature, fed 20
 Thus on flame, was scarce injurious
 Save to fools who woke its ire,
 Thinking fit to play with fire.
 'T is the Crescent you admire?

Then, be Diane! I'll be Francis.
 Crescents change, — true! — wax and wane.
 Woman-like: male hearts retain
 Heat nor, once warm, cool again.

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So, we figure — such our chance is —
I as man and you as . . . What? 80
Take offence? My Love forgot
He plays woman, I do not?

I — the woman? See my habit,
Ask my people! Anyhow,
Be we what we may, one vow
Binds us, male or female. Now, —
Stand, Sir! Read! "*Quis separabit?*"
Half a mile of pictured way
Past these palace-walls to-day
Traversed, this I came to say. 40

You must needs begin to love me;
First I hated, then, at best,
— Have it so! — I acquiesced;
Pure compassion did the rest
From below thus raised above me,
Would you, step by step, descend,
Pity me, become my friend,
Like me, like less, loathe at end?

That 's the ladder's round you rose by!
That — my own foot kicked away, 80
Having raised you: let it stay,
Serve you for retreating? Nay.
Close to me you climbed: as close by,
Keep your station, though the peak
Reached proves somewhat bare and bleak!
Woman 's strong if man is weak.

Keep here, loving me forever!
Love's look, gesture, speech, I claim;
Act love, lie love, all the same —
Play as earnest were our game! 60

Lonely I stood long: 't was clever
 When you climbed, before men's eyes,
 Spurned the earth and scaled the skies,
 Gained my peak and grasped your prize.

Here you stood, then, to men's wonder;
 Here you tire of standing? Kneel!
 Cure what giddiness you feel,
 This way! Do your senses reel?
 Not unlikely! What rolls under?
 Yawning death in yon abyss 70
 Where the waters whirl and hiss
 Round more frightful peaks than this.

Should my buffet dash you thither . . .
 But be sage! No watery grave
 Needs await you: seeming brave
 Kneel on safe, dear timid slave!
 You surmised, when you climbed hither,
 Just as easy were retreat
 Should you tire, conceive unmeet
 Longer patience at my feet? 80

Me as standing, you as stooping, —
 Who arranged for each the pose?
 Lest men think us friends turned foes,
 Keep the attitude you chose!
 Men are used to this same grouping —
 I and you like statues seen.
 You and I, no third between,
 Kneel and stand! That makes the scene.

Mar it — and one buffet . . . Pardon!
 Needless warmth — wise words in waste! 90
 'T was prostration that replaced
 Kneeling, then? A proof of taste.

Crouch, not kneel, while I mount guard on
 Prostrate love — become no waif,
 No estray to waves that chafe
 Disappointed — love's so safe!

Waves that chafe? The idlest fancy!
 Peaks that scare? I think we know
 Walls enclose our sculpture: so
 Grouped, we pose in Fontainebleau. 100
 Up now! Wherefore hesitancy?
 Arm in arm and cheek by cheek,
 Laugh with me at waves and peak!
 Silent still? Why, pictures speak.

See, where Juno strikes Ixion,
 Primatice speaks plainly! Pooh —
 Rather, Florentine Le Roux!
 I've lost head for who is who —
 So it swims and wanders! Fie on
 What still proves me female! Here, 110
 By the staircase! — for we near
 That dark "Gallery of the Deer."

Look me in the eyes once! Steady!
 Are you faithful now as erst
 On that eve when we two first
 Vowed at Avon, blessed and cursed
 Faith and falsehood? Pale already?
 Forward! Must my hand compel
 Entrance — this way? Exit — well,
 Somehow, somewhere. Who can tell? 120

What if to the self-same place in
 Rustic Avon, at the door
 Of the village church once more,
 Where a tombstone paves the floor

By that holy-water basin
 You appealed to — “As, below,
 This stone hides its corpse, e’en so
 I your secrets hide”? What ho!

Friends, my four! You, Priest, confess him!
 I have judged the culprit there: 130
 Execute my sentence! Care
 For no mail such cowards wear!
 Done, Priest? Then, absolve and bless him!
 Now — you three, stab thick and fast,
 Deep and deeper! Dead at last?
 Thanks, friends — Father, thanks! Aghast?

What one word of his confession
 Would you tell me, though I lured
 With that royal crown abjured
 Just because its bars immured 140
 Love too much? Love burst compression,
 Fled free, finally confessed
 All its secrets to that breast
 Whence . . . let Avon tell the rest!

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT AND FUSELI

OH but is it not hard, Dear?
 Mine are the nerves to quake at a mouse:
 If a spider drops I shrink with fear:
 I should die outright in a haunted house;
 While for you — did the danger dared bring help —
 From a lion’s den I could steal his whelp,
 With a serpent round me, stand stock-still,
 Go sleep in a churchyard, — so would will
 Give me the power to dare and do
 Valiantly — just for you! 10

Much amiss in the head, Dear,

I toil at a language, tax my brain
Attempting to draw — the scratches here!

I play, play, practise and all in vain:
But for you — if my triumph brought you pride,
I would grapple with Greek Plays till I died,
Paint a portrait of you — who can tell?
Work my fingers off for your "Pretty well:"
Language and painting and music too,
Easily done — for you!

20

Strong and fierce in the heart, Dear,

With — more than a will — what seems a power
To pounce on my prey, love outbroke here

In flame devouring and to devour.
Such love has labored its best and worst
To win me a lover; yet, last as first,
I have not quickened his pulse one beat,
Fixed a moment's fancy, bitter or sweet:
Yet the strong fierce heart's love's labor's due,
Utterly lost, was — you!

30

ADAM, LILITH, AND EVE

ONE day it thundered and lightened.

Two women, fairly frightened,
Sank to their knees, transformed, transfixed,
At the feet of the man who sat betwixt;
And "Mercy!" cried each — "if I tell the truth
Of a passage in my youth!"

Said This: "Do you mind the morning
I met your love with scorning?
As the worst of the venom left my lips,
I thought 'If, despite this lie, he strips

10

The mask from my soul with a kiss — I crawl
His slave, — soul, body and all!”

Said That: “We stood to be married;
The priest, or some one, tarried;
‘If Paradise-door prove locked?’ smiled you.
I thought, as I nodded, smiling too,
‘Did one, that’s away, arrive — nor late
Nor soon should unlock Hell’s gate!’”

It ceased to lighten and thunder.
Up started both in wonder,
Looked round and saw that the sky was clear,
Then laughed “Confess you believed us, Dear!”
“I saw through the joke!” the man replied
They re-seated themselves beside.

IXION

HIGH in the dome, suspended, of Hell, sad triumph,
behold us!

Here the revenge of a God, there the amends of a
Man.

Whirling forever in torment, flesh once mortal,
immortal

Made — for a purpose of hate — able to die and
revive,

Pays to the uttermost pang, then, newly for pay-
ment replenished,

Doles out — old yet young — agonies ever afresh;
Whence the result above me: torment is bridged
by a rainbow, —

Tears, sweat, blood, — each spasm, ghastly
once, glorified now.

Wrung, by the rush of the wheel ordained my place
 of reposing,
 Off in a sparklike spray, — flesh become vapor
 thro' pain, — 10
 Flies the bestowment of Zeus, soul's vaunted bodily
 vesture,
 Made that his feats observed gain the approval
 of Man, —
 Flesh that he fashioned with sense of the earth and
 the sky and the ocean,
 Framed should pierce to the star, fitted to pore
 on the plant, —
 All, for a purpose of hate, re-framed, re-fashioned,
 re-fitted
 Till, consummate at length, — lo, the employ-
 ment of sense!
 Pain's mere minister now to the soul, once pledged
 to her pleasure —
 Soul, if untrammelled by flesh, unapprehensive
 of pain!
 Body, professed soul's slave, which serving beguiled
 and betrayed her,
 Made things false seem true, cheated thro' eye
 and thro' ear, 20
 Lured thus heart and brain to believe in the lying
 reported, —
 Spurn but the traitorous slave, uttermost atom,
 away,
 What should obstruct soul's rush on the real, the
 only apparent?
 Say I have erred, — how else? Was I Ixion or
 Zeus?
 Foiled by my senses I dreamed; I doubtless awaken
 in wonder:

This proves shine, that — shade? Good was the
 evil that seemed?
 Shall I, with sight thus gained, by torture be
 taught I was blind once?
 Sisuphos, teaches thy stone — Tantalos, teaches
 thy thirst
 Aught which unaided sense, purged pure, less
 plainly demonstrates?
 No, for the past was dream: now that the
 dreamers awake, 30
 Sisuphos scouts low fraud, and to Tantalos treason
 is folly.
 Ask of myself, whose form melts on the murderous
 wheel,
 What is the sin which throe and throe prove sin to
 the sinner!
 Say the false charge was true, — thus do I expi-
 ate, say,
 Arrogant thought, word, deed, — mere man who
 conceited me godlike,
 Sat beside Zeus, my friend — knelt before Heré,
 my love!
 What were the need but of pitying power to touch
 and disperse it,
 Film-work — eye's and ear's — all the distrac-
 tion of sense?
 How should the soul not see, not hear, — perceive
 and as plainly
 Render, in thought, word, deed, back again
 truth — not a lie? 40
 “Ay, but the pain is to punish thee!” Zeus, once
 more for a pastime,
 Play the familiar, the frank! Speak and have
 speech in return!

I was of Thessaly king, there ruled and a people
obeyed me:

Mine to establish the law, theirs to obey it or die:
Wherefore? Because of the good to the people,
because of the honor

Thence accruing to me, king, the king's law was
supreme.

What of the weakling, the ignorant criminal? Not
who, excuseless,

Breaking my law braved death, knowing his deed
and its due —

Nay, but the feeble and foolish, the poor trans-
gressor, of purpose

No whit more than a tree, born to erectness of
bole, 50

Palm or plane or pine, we laud if lofty, columnar —
Loathe if athwart, askew, — leave to the axe
and the flame!

Where is the vision may penetrate earth and behold-
ing acknowledge

Just one pebble at root ruined the straightness
of stem?

Whose fine vigilance follows the sapling, accounts
for the failure,

— Here blew wind, so it bent: there the snow
lodged, so it broke?

Also the tooth of the beast, bird's bill, mere bite
of the insect

Gnawed, gnarled, warped their worst: passive it
lay to offence.

King — I was man, no more: what I recognized
faulty I punished,

Laying it prone: be sure, more than a man had I
proved, 60

Watch and ward o'er the sapling at birth-time had
 saved it, nor simply
 Owned the distortion's excuse, — hindered it
 wholly: nay, more —
 Even a man, as I sat in my place to do judgment,
 and pallid
 Criminals passing to doom shuddered away at
 my foot,
 Could I have probed thro' the face to the heart,
 read plain a repentance,
 Crime confessed fools' play, virtue ascribed to the
 wise,
 Had I not stayed the consignment to doom, not
 dealt the renewed ones
 Life to retraverse the past, light to retrieve the
 misdeed?
 Thus had I done, and thus to have done much
 more it behoves thee,
 Zeus who madest man — flawless or faulty, thy
 work! 70
 What if the charge were true, as thou moutheest, —
 Ixion the cherished
 Minion of Zeus grew vain, vied with the godships
 and fell,
 Forfeit thro' arrogance? Stranger! I clothed, with
 the grace of our human,
 Inhumanity — gods, natures I likened to ours.
 Man among men I had borne me till gods forsooth
 must regard me
 — Nay, must approve, applaud, claim as a com-
 rade at last.
 Summoned to enter their circle, I sat — their equal,
 how other?
 Love should be absolute love, faith is in fulness
 or naught.

"I am thy friend, be mine!" smiled Zeus: "If Heré
attract thee,"

Blushed the imperial cheek, "then — as thy
heart may suggest!"⁸⁰

Faith in me sprang to the faith, my love hailed
love as its fellow,

"Zeus, we are friends — how fast! Heré, my
heart for thy heart!"

Then broke smile into fury of frown, and the
thunder of "Hence, fool!"

Then thro' the kiss laughed scorn "Limbs or a
cloud was to clasp?"

Then from Olumpos to Erebos, then from the
rapture to torment,

Then from the fellow of gods — misery's mate,
to the man!

— Man henceforth and forever, who lent from the
glow of his nature

Warmth to the cold, with light colored the black
and the blank.

So did a man conceive of your passion, you passion-
protesters!

So did he trust, so love — being the truth of
your lie!⁹⁰

You to aspire to be Man! Man made you who
vainly would ape him:

You are the hollowness, he — filling you, falsifies
void.

Even as — witness the emblem, Hell's sad triumph
suspended,

Born of my tears, sweat, blood — bursting to
vapor above —

Arching my torment, an iris ghostlike startles the
darkness,

Cold white — jewelry quenched — justifies, glorifies pain.
 Strive, mankind, though strife endure through endless obstruction,
 Stage after stage, each rise marred by as certain a fall!
 Baffled forever — yet never so baffled but, e'en in the baffling,
 When Man's strength proves weak, checked in the body or soul — 100
 Whatsoever the medium, flesh or essence, — Ixion's
 Made for a purpose of hate, — clothing the entity
 Thou,
 — Medium whence that entity strives for the Not-Thou beyond it,
 Fire elemental, free, frame unencumbered, the All, —
 Never so baffled but — when, on the verge of an alien existence,
 Heartened to press, by pangs burst to the infinite
 Pure,
 Nothing is reached but the ancient weakness still that arrests strength,
 Circumambient still, still the poor human array,
 Pride and revenge and hate and cruelty — all it has burst through,
 Thought to escape, — fresh formed, found in the fashion it fled, — 110
 Never so baffled but — when Man pays the price of endeavor,
 Thunderstruck, downthrust, Tartaros-doomed to the wheel, —
 Then, ay, then, from the tears and sweat and blood of his torment,

E'en from the triumph of Hell, up let him look
 and rejoice!
 What is the influence, high o'er Hell, that turns to
 a rapture
 Pain — and despair's murk mists blends in a
 rainbow of hope?
 What is beyond the obstruction, stage by stage tho'
 it baffle?
 Back must I fall, confess "Ever the weakness I
 fled"?
 No, for beyond, far, far is a Purity all-unobstructed!
 Zeus was Zeus — not Man: wrecked by his
 weakness, I whirl. 120
 Out of the wreck I rise — past Zeus to the Potency
 o'er him!
 I — to have hailed him my friend! I — to have
 clasped her — my love!
 Pallid birth of my pain, — where light, where light
 is, aspiring
 Thither I rise, whilst thou — Zeus, keep the
 godship and sink!

JOCHANAN HAKKADOSH

"THIS now, this other story makes amends
 And justifies our Mishna," quoth the Jew
 Aforesaid. "Tell it, learnedest of friends!"

A certain morn broke beautiful and blue
 O'er Schiphaz city, bringing joy and mirth,
 — So had ye deemed; while the reverse was true,

Since one small house there gave a sorrow birth
 In such black sort that, to each faithful eye,
 Midnight, not morning settled on the earth.

How else, when it grew certain thou wouldst die 10
 Our much-enlightened master, Israel's prop,
 Eximious Jochanan Ben Sabbathai?

Old, yea but, undiminished of a drop,
 The vital essence pulsed through heart and brain;
 Time left unsickled yet the plenteous crop

On poll and chin and cheek, whereof a skein
 Handmaids might weave — hairs silk-soft, silver-
 white,
 Such as the wool-plant's; none the less in vain

Had Physic striven her best against the spite
 Of fell disease: the Rabbi must succumb; 20
 And, round the couch whereon in piteous plight

He lay a-dying, scholars, — awe-struck, dumb
 Throughout the night-watch, — roused themselves
 and spoke

One to the other: "Ere death's touch benumb

"His active sense, — while yet 'neath Reason's yoke
 Obedient toils his tongue, — befits we claim
 The fruit of long experience, bid this oak

"Shed us an acorn which may, all the same,
 Grow to a temple-pillar, — dear that day! —
 When Israel's scattered seed finds place and name 30

"Among the envious nations. Lamp us, pray,
 Thou the Enlightener! Partest hence in peace?
 Hailest without regret — much less, dismay —

"The hour of thine approximate release
 From fleshly bondage soul hath found obstruct?
 Calmly envisagest the sure increase

“Of knowledge? Eden’s tree must hold unplucked
Some apple, sure, has never tried thy tooth,
Juicy with sapience thou hast sought, not sucked?”

“Say, does age acquiesce in vanished youth? 40
Still towers thy purity above — as erst —
Our pleasant follies? Be thy last word — truth!”

The Rabbi groaned; then, grimly, “Last as first
The truth speak I — in boyhood who began
Striving to live an angel, and, amerced,

“For such presumption, die now hardly man.
What have I proved of life? To live, indeed,
That much I learned: but here lies Jochanan

“More luckless than stood David when, to speed
His fighting with the Philistine, they brought 50
Saul’s harness forth: whereat, ‘Alack, I need

“‘Armor to arm me, but have never fought
With sword and spear, nor tried to manage shield,
Proving arms’ use, as well-trained warrior ought.

“‘Only a sling and pebbles can I wield!’
So he: while I, contrariwise, ‘No trick
Of weapon helpful on the battle-field

“‘Comes unfamiliar to my theoretic:
But, bid me put in practice what I know,
Give me a sword — it stings like Moses’ stick, 60

“‘A serpent I let drop apace.’ E’en so,
I, — able to comport me at each stage
Of human life as never here below

“Man played his part, — since mine the heritage
Of wisdom carried to that perfect pitch,
Ye rightly praise, — I, therefore, who, thus sage,

“Could sure act man triumphantly, enrich
Life’s annals with example how I played
Lover, Bard, Soldier, Statist, — (all of which

“Parts in presentment failing, cries invade 70
The world’s ear — ‘Ah, the Past, the pearl-gift
 thrown
To hogs, time’s opportunity we made

“‘So light of, only recognized when flown!
Had we been wise!’) — in fine, I — wise enough, —
What profit brings me wisdom never shown

“Just when its showing would from each rebuff
Shelter weak virtue, threaten back to bounds
Encroaching vice, tread smooth each track too rough

“For youth’s unsteady footstep, climb the rounds
Of life’s long ladder, one by slippery one, 80
Yet make no stumble? Me hard fate confounds

“With that same crowd of wailers I outrun
By promising to teach another cry
Of more hilarious mood than theirs, the sun

“I look my last at is insulted by.
What cry, — ye ask? Give ear on every side!
Witness yon Lover! ‘How entrapped am I!

“‘Methought, because a virgin’s rose-lip vied
With ripe Khubbezleh’s, needs must beauty mate
With meekness and discretion in a bride: 90

“Bride she became to me who wail — too late —
Unwise I loved! That's one cry. 'Mind's my gift:
 I might have loaded me with lore, full weight

“Pressed down and running over at each rift
 O' the brain-bag where the famished clung and fed.
 I filled it with what rubbish! — would not sift

“The wheat from chaff, sound grain from musty —
 shed
 Poison abroad as oft as nutriment —
 And sighing say but as my fellows said,

“*Unwise I learned!* That's two. 'In dwarf's-
 play spent 100
 Was giant's prowess: warrior all unversed
 In war's right waging, I struck brand, was lent

“For steel's fit service, on mere stone — and cursed
 Alike the shocked limb and the shivered steel,
 Seeing too late the blade's true use which erst

“How was I blind to! My cry swells the peal —
Unwise I fought! That's three. But wherefore
 waste
 Breath on the wailings longer? Why reveal

“A root of bitterness whereof the taste
 Is noisome to Humanity at large? 110
 First we get Power, but Power absurdly placed

“In Folly's keeping, who resigns her charge
 To Wisdom when all Power grows nothing worth:
 Bones marrowless are mocked with helm and targe

"When, like your Master's, soon below the earth
With worms shall warfare only be. Farewell,
Children! I die a failure since my birth!"

"Not so!" arose a protest as, pell-mell,
They pattered from his chamber to the street,
Bent on a last resource. Our Targums tell 130

That such resource there is. Put case, there meet
The Nine Points of Perfection — rarest chance —
Within some saintly teacher whom the fleet

Years, in their blind implacable advance,
O'ertake before fit teaching born of these
Have magnified his scholars' countenance, —

If haply folk compassionating please
To render up — according to his store,
Each one — a portion of the life he sees

Hardly worth saving when 't is set before 130
Earth's benefit should the Saint, Hakkadosh,
Favored thereby, attain to full fourscore —

If such contribute (Scoffer, spare thy "Bosh!")
A year, a month, a day, an hour — to eke
Life out, — in him away the gift shall wash

That much of ill-spent time recorded, streak
The twilight of the so-assisted sage
With a new sunrise: truth, though strange to speak!

Quick to the doorway, then, where youth and age,
All Israel, thronging, waited for the last 140
News of the loved one. "'T is the final stage:

“Art’s utmost done, the Rabbi’s feet tread fast
The way of all flesh!” So announced that apt
Olive-branch Tsaddik: “Yet, O Brethren, cast

“No eye to earthward! Look where heaven has
clapped
Morning’s extinguisher — yon ray-shot robe
Of sun-threads — on the constellation mapped

“And mentioned by our Elders, — yea, from Job
Down to Satam, — as figuring forth — what?
Perpend a mystery! Ye call it *Dob* — 150

“‘The Bear’: I trow, a wiser name than that
Were *Aisch* — ‘The Bier’: a corpse those four stars
hold,
Which — are not those Three Daughters weeping
at,

“*Banoth?* I judge so: list while I unfold
The reason. As in twice twelve hours this Bier
Goes and returns, about the East-cone rolled,

“So may a setting luminary here
Be rescued from extinction, rolled anew
Upon its track of labor, strong and clear,

“About the Pole — that Salem, every Jew 100
Helps to build up when thus he saves some Saint
Ordained its architect. Ye grasp the clue

“To all ye seek? The Rabbi’s lamp-flame faint
Sinks: would ye raise it? Lend then life from
yours,
Spare each his oil-drop! Do I need acquaint

"The Chosen how self-sacrifice ensures
 Ten-fold requital? — urge ye emulate
 The fame of those Old Just Ones death procures

"Such praise for, that 't is now men's sole debate
 Which of the Ten, who volunteered at Rome 170
 To die for glory to our Race, was great

"Beyond his fellows? Was it thou — the comb
 Of iron carded, flesh from bone, away,
 While thy lips sputtered thro' their bloody foam

"Without a stoppage (O brave Akiba!)
 'Hear, Israel, our Lord God is One'? Or thou,
 Jischab? — who smiledst, burning, since there lay,

"Burning along with thee, our Law! I trow,
 Such martyrdom might tax flesh to afford:
 While that for which I make petition now, 180

"To what amounts it? Youngster, wilt thou hoard
 Each minute of long years thou look'st to spend
 In dalliance with thy spouse? Hast thou so soared,

"Singer of songs, all out of sight of friend
 And teacher, warbling like a woodland bird,
 There 's left no Selah, 'twixt two psalms, to lend

"Our late-so-tuneful quirist? Thou, averred
 The fighter born to plant our lion-flag
 Once more on Zion's mount, — doth, all-unheard,

"My pleading fail to move thee? Toss some rag 190
 Shall stanch our wound, some minute never missed
 From swordsman's lustihood like thine! Wilt lag

“In liberal bestowment, show close fist
When open palm we look for, — thou, wide-known
For statecraft? whom, ’t is said, an if thou list,

“The Shah himself would seat beside his throne,
So valued were advice from thee” . . . But here
He stopped short: such a hubbub! Not alone

From those addressed, but, far as well as near, . 199
The crowd broke into clamor: “Mine, mine, mine —
Lop from my life the excrescence, never fear!

“At me thou lookedst, markedst me! Assign
To me that privilege of granting life —
Mine, mine!” Then he: “Be patient! I combine

“The needful portions only, wage no strife
With Nature’s law nor seek to lengthen out
The Rabbi’s day unduly. ’T is the knife

“I stop, — would cut its thread too short. About
As much as helps life last the proper term, 209
The appointed Fourscore, — that I crave and scout

“A too-prolonged existence. Let the worm
Change at fit season to the butterfly!
And here a story strikes me, to confirm

“This judgment. Of our worthies, none ranks high
As Perida who kept the famous school:
None rivalled him in patience: none! For why?

“In lecturing it was his constant rule,
Whatever he expounded, to repeat
— Ay, and keep on repeating, lest some fool

“Should fail to understand him fully — (feat 220
Unparalleled, Uzzean!) — do ye mark? —
Five hundred times! So might he entrance beat

“For knowledge into howsoever dark
And dense the brain-pan. Yet it happed, at close
Of one especial lecture, not one spark

“Of light was found to have illumed the rows
Of pupils round their pedagogue. ‘What, still
Impenetrable to me? Then — here goes!’

“And for a second time he sets the rill
Of knowledge running, and five hundred times 230
More re-repeats the matter — and gains *nil*.

“Out broke a voice from heaven: ‘Thy patience
climbs
Even thus high. Choose! Wilt thou, rather, quick
Ascend to bliss — or, since thy zeal sublimes

“‘Such drudgery, will thy back still bear its crick,
Bent o’er thy class, — thy voice drone spite of
drouth, —
Five hundred years more at thy desk wilt stick?’

“‘To heaven with me!’ was in the good man’s
mouth,
When all his scholars, — cruel-kind were they! —
Stopped utterance, from East, West, North and
South, 240

“Rending the welkin with their shout of ‘Nay —
No heaven as yet for our instructor! Grant
Five hundred years on earth for Perida!’

“And so long did he keep instructing! Want
Our Master no such misery! I but take
Three months of life marital. Ministrant

“Be thou of so much, Poet! Bold I make,
Swordsman, with thy frank offer! — and conclude,
Statist, with thine! One year, — ye will not shake

“My purpose to accept no more. So rude? 250
The very boys and girls, forsooth, must press
And proffer their addition? Thanks! The mood

“Is laudable, but I reject, no less,
One month, week, day of life more. Leave my gown
Ye overbold ones! Your life’s gift, you guess,

“Were good as any? Rudesby, get thee down!
Set my feet free, or fear my staff! Farewell,
Seniors and saviours, sharers of renown

“With Jochanan henceforward!” Straightway fell
Sleep on the sufferer; who awoke in health, 260
Hale everyway, so potent was the spell.

O the rare Spring-time! Who is he by stealth
Approaches Jochanan? — embowered that sits
Under his vine and figtree mid the wealth

Of garden-sights and sounds, since intermits
Never the turtle’s coo, nor stays nor stints
The rose her smell. In homage that befits

The musing Master, Tsaddik, see, imprints
A kiss on the extended foot, low bends
Forehead to earth, then, all-obsequious, hints 270

“What if it should be time? A period ends —
That of the Lover’s gift — his quarter-year
Of lustihood: ’t is just thou make amends,

“Return that loan with usury: so, here
Come I, of thy Disciples delegate,
Claiming our lesson from thee. Make appear

“Thy profit from experience! Plainly state
How men should Love!” Thus he: and to him thus
The Rabbi: “Love, ye call it? — rather, Hate!

“What wouldst thou? Is it needful I discuss 280
Wherefore new sweet wine, poured in bottles caked
With old strong wine’s deposit, offers us

“Spoilt liquor we recoil from, thirst-unslaked?
Like earth-smoke from a crevice, out there wound
Languors and yearnings: not a sense but ached

“Weighed on by fancied form and feature, sound
Of silver word and sight of sunny smile:
No beckoning of a flower-branch, no profound

“Purple of noon-oppression, no light wile
O’ the West wind, but transformed itself till —
brief — 290
Before me stood the phantasy ye style

“Youth’s love, the joy that shall not come to grief,
Born to endure, eternal, unimpaired
By custom the accloyer, time the thief.

“Had Age’s hard cold knowledge only spared
That ignorance of Youth! But now the dream,
Fresh as from Paradise, alighting fared

"As fares the pigeon, finding what may seem
Her nest's safe hollow holds a snake inside
Coiled to enclasp her. See, Eve stands supreme 300

"In youth and beauty! Take her for thy bride!
What Youth deemed crystal, Age finds out was dew
Morn set a-sparkle, but which noon quick dried

"While Youth bent gazing at its red and blue
Supposed perennial, — never dreamed the sun
Which kindled the display would quench it too.

"Graces of shape and color — every one
With its appointed period of decay
When ripe to purpose! 'Still, these dead and done,

"Survives the woman-nature — the soft sway 310
Of undefinable omnipotence
O'er our strong male-stuff, we of Adam's clay.'

"Ay, if my physics taught not why and whence
The attraction! Am I like the simple steer
Who, from his pasture lured inside the fence

"Where yoke and goad await him, holds that mere
Kindliness prompts extension of the hand
Hollowed for barley, which drew near and near

"His nose — in proof that, of the horned band,
The farmer best affected him! Beside, 320
Steer, since his calthood, got to understand

"Farmers a many in the world so wide
Were ready with a handful just as choice
Or choicer — maize and cummin, treats untried.

"Shall I wed wife, and all my days rejoice
I gained the peacock? 'Las me, round I look,
And lo — 'With me thou wouldst have blamed no
voice

"'Like hers that daily deafens like a rook:
I am the phoenix!' — 'I, the lark, the dove, 329
— The owl,' for aught knows who he blindly took

"Peacock for partner, while the vale, the grove,
The plain held bird-mates in abundance. There!
Youth, try fresh capture! Age has found out Love

"Long ago. War seems better worth man's care.
But leave me! Disappointment finds a balm
Haply in slumber." "This first step o' the stair

"To knowledge fails me, but the victor's palm
Lies on the next to tempt him overleap
A stumbling-block. Experienced, gather calm,

"Thou excellence of Judah, cured by sleep 340
Which ushers in the Warrior, to replace
The Lover! At due season I shall reap

"Fruit of my planting!" So, with lengthened face,
Departed Tsaddik: and three moons more waxed
And waned, and not until the Summer-space

Waned likewise, any second visit taxed
The Rabbi's patience. But at three months' end,
Behold, supine beneath a rock, relaxed

The sage lay musing till the moon should spend
Its ardor. Up comes Tsaddik, who but he, 350
With "Master, may I warn thee, nor offend,

“That time comes round again? We look to see
Sprout from the old branch — not the youngling
twig —

But fruit of sycamine: deliver me,

“To share among my fellows, some plump fig,
Juicy as seedy! That same man of war,
Who, with a scantling of his store, made big

“Thy starveling nature, caused thee, safe from scar,
To share his gains by long acquaintanceship 359
With bump and bruise and all the knocks that are

“Of battle dowry, — he bids loose thy lip,
Explain the good of battle! Since thou know'st
Let us know likewise! Fast the moments slip,

“More need that we improve them!” — “Ay, we
boast,

We warriors in our youth, that with the sword
Man goes the swiftest to the uttermost —

“Takes the straight way thro' lands yet unexplored
To absolute Right and Good, — may so obtain
God's glory and man's weal too long ignored,

“Too late attained by preachments all in vain — 370
The passive process. Knots get tangled worse
By toying with: does cut cord close again?

“Moreqver there is blessing in the curse
Peace-praisers call war. What so sure evolves
All the capacities of soul, proves nurse

“Of that self-sacrifice in men which solves
The riddle — *Wherein differs Man from beast?*
Foxes boast cleverness and courage wolves:

“Nowhere but in mankind is found the least
 Touch of an impulse ‘To our fellows — good 380
 I’ the highest! — not diminished but increased

“‘By the condition plainly understood
 — Such good shall be attained at price of hurt
 I’ the highest to ourselves!’ Fine sparks, that brood

“Confusedly in Man, ’t is war bids spurt
 Forth into flame: as fares the meteor-mass,
 Whereof no particle but holds inert

“Some seed of light and heat, however crass
 The enclosure, yet avails not to discharge
 Its radiant birth before there come to pass 390

“Some push external, — strong to set at large
 Those dormant fire-seeds, whirl them in a trice
 Through heaven and light up earth from marge to
 marge:

“Since force by motion makes — what erst was
 ice —
 Crash into fervency and so expire,
 Because some Djinn has hit on a device

“For proving the full prettiness of fire!
 Ay, thus we prattle — young: but old — why, first,
 Where’s that same Right and Good — (the wise
 inquire) —

“So absolute, it warrants the outburst 400
 Of blood, tears, all war’s woful consequence,
 That comes of the fine flaring? Which plague
 cursed

“The more your benefited Man — offence,
Or what suppressed the offender? Say it did —
Show us the evil cured by violence,

“Submission cures not also! Lift the lid
From the maturing crucible, we find
Its slow sure coaxing-out of virtue hid

“In that same meteor-mass, hath uncombined
Those particles and, yielding for result ⁴¹⁰
Gold, not mere flame, by so much leaves behind

“The heroic product. E’en the simple cult
Of Edom’s children wisely bids them turn
Cheek to the smiter with ‘*Sic Jesus vult.*’

“Say there’s a tyrant by whose death we earn
Freedom, and justify a war to wage:
Good! — were we only able to discern

“Exactly how to reach and catch and cage
Him only and no innocent beside!
Whereas the folk whereon war wreaks its rage ⁴²⁰

“— How shared they his ill-doing? Far and wide
The victims of our warfare strew the plain,
Ten thousand dead, whereof not one but died

“In faith that vassals owed their suzerain
Life: therefore each paid tribute, — honest soul, —
To that same Right and Good ourselves are fain

“To call exclusively our end. From bole
(Since ye accept in me a sycamine)
Pluck, eat, digest a fable — yea, the sole

“Fig I afford you! ‘Dost thou dwarf my vine?’ 480
 (So did a certain husbandman address
 The tree which faced his field), ‘Receive condign

“‘Punishment, prompt removal by the stress
 Of axe I forthwith lay unto thy root!’
 Long did he hack and hew, the root no less

“As long defied him, for its tough strings shoot
 As deep down as the boughs above aspire:
 All that he did was — shake to the tree’s foot

“Leafage and fruitage, things we most require
 For shadow and refreshment: which good deed 440
 Thoroughly done, behold the axe-haft tires

“His hand, and he desisting leaves unfreed
 The vine he hacked and hewed for. Comes a frost,
 One natural night’s work, and there’s little need

“Of hacking, hewing: lo, the tree’s a ghost!
 Perished it starves, black death from topmost bough
 To farthest-reaching fibre! Shall I boast

“My rough work, — warfare, — helped more?
 Loving, now —
 That, by comparison, seems wiser, since
 The loving fool was able to avow 480

“He could effect his purpose, just evince
 Love’s willingness, — once ’ware of what she lacked,
 His loved one, — to go work for that, nor wince

“At self-expenditure: he neither hacked
 Nor hewed, but when the lady of his field
 Required defence because the sun attacked,

“He, failing to obtain a fitter shield,
Would interpose his body, and so blaze,
Blest in the burning. Ah, were mine to wield

“The intellectual weapon — poet-lays, — 400
How preferably had I sung one song
Which . . . but my sadness sinks me: go your ways!

“I sleep out disappointment.” “Come along,
Never lose heart! There’s still as much again
Of our bestowment left to right the wrong

“Done by its earlier moiety — explain
Wherefore, who may! The Poet’s mood comes next.
Was he not wishful the poetic vein

“Should pulse within him? Jochanan, thou reck’st
Little of what a generous flood shall soon 470
Float thy clogged spirit free and unperplexed

“Above dry dubitation! Song’s the boon
Shall make amends for my untoward mistake
That Joshua-like thou couldst bid sun and moon —

“Fighter and Lover, — which for most men make
All they descry in heaven, — stand both stock-still
And lend assistance. Poet shall thou wake!”

Autumn brings Tsaddik. “Ay, there speeds the rill
Loaded with leaves: a scowling sky, beside:
The wind makes olive-trees up yonder hill 480

“Whiten and shudder — symptoms far and wide
Of gleaning-time’s approach; and glean good store
May I presume to trust we shall, thou tried

“And ripe experimenter! Three months more
Have ministered to growth of Song: that graft
Into thy sterile stock has found at core

“Moisture, I warrant, hitherto unquaffed
By boughs, however florid, wanting sap
Of prose-experience which provides the draught 489

“Which song-sprouts, wanting, wither: vain we tap
A youngling stem all green and immature:
Experience must secrete the stuff, our hap

“Will be to quench Man’s thirst with, glad and sure
That fancy wells up through corrective fact:
Missing which test of truth, though flowers allure

“The goodman’s eye with promise, soon the pact
Is broken, and ’t is flowers, — mere words, — he
finds
When things, — that’s fruit, — he looked for.
Well, once cracked

“The nut, how glad my tooth the kernel grinds!
Song may henceforth boast substance! Therefore,
hail 500
Proser and poet, perfect in both kinds!

“Thou from whose eye hath dropped the envious
scale
Which hides the truth of things and substitutes
Deceptive show, unaided optics fail

“To transpierce, — hast entrusted to the lute’s
Soft but sure guardianship some unrevealed
Secret shall lift mankind above the brutes

“As only knowledge can?” “A fount unsealed”
 (Sighed Jochanan) “should seek the heaven in
 leaps
 To die in dew-gems — not find death, congealed 510

“By contact with the cavern’s nether deeps,
 Earth’s secretest foundation where, enswathed
 In dark and fear, primæval mystery sleeps —

“Petrific fount wherein my fancies bathed
 And straight turned ice. My dreams of good and
 fair
 In soaring upwards had dissolved, unscathed

“By any influence of the kindly air,
 Singing, as each took flight, The Future — that’s
 Our destination, mists turn rainbows there,

“Which sink to fog, confounded in the flats 520
 O’ the Present! Day’s the song-time for the lark,
 Night for her music boasts but owls and bats.

“And what’s the Past but night — the deep and
 dark
 Ice-spring I speak of, corpse-thicked with its drowned
 Dead fancies which no sooner touched the mark

“They aimed at — fact — than all at once they
 found
 Their film-wings freeze, henceforth unfit to reach
 And roll in æther, revel — robed and crowned

“As truths, confirmed by falsehood all and each —
 Sovereign and absolute and ultimate! 530
 Up with them, skyward, Youth, ere Age impeach

“Thy least of promises to re-instate
Adam in Eden! Sing on, ever sing,
Chirp till thou burst! — the fool cicada’s fate,

“Who holds that after Summer next comes Spring,
Than Summer’s self sun-warmed, spice-scented
more.

Fighting was better! There, no fancy-fling

“Pitches you past the point was reached of yore
By Samsons, Abners, Joabs, Judases,
The mighty men of valor who, before

540

“Our little day, did wonders none profess
To doubt were fable and not fact, so trust
By fancy-flights to emulate much less.

“Were I a Statesman, now! Why, that were just
To pinnacle my soul, mankind above,
A-top the universe: no vulgar lust

“To gratify — fame, greed, at this remove
Looked down upon so far — or overlooked
So largely, rather — that mine eye should rove

540

“World-wide and rummage earth, the many-nooked,
Yet find no unit of the human flock,
Caught straying but straight comes back hooked
and crooked

“By the strong shepherd who, from out his stock
Of aids proceeds to treat each ailing fleece,
Here stimulate to growth, curtail and dock

“There, baldness or excrescence, — that, with grease,
This, with up-grubbing of the bristly patch
Born of the tick-bite. How supreme a peace

“Steals o’er the Statist, — while, in wit, a match
For shrewd Ahithophel, in wisdom . . . well, 560
His name escapes me — somebody, at watch

“And ward, the fellow of Ahithophel
In guidance of the Chosen!” — at which word
Eyes closed and fast asleep the Rabbi fell.

“Cold weather!” shivered Tsaddik. “Yet the hoard
Of the sagacious ant shows garnered grain,
Ever abundant most when fields afford

“Least pasture, and alike disgrace the plain
Tall tree and lowly shrub. ’T is so with us
Mortals: our age stores wealth ye seek in vain 570

“While busy youth culls just what we discuss
At leisure in the last days: and the last
Truly are these for Jochanan, whom thus

“I make one more appeal to! Thine amassed
Experience, now or never, let escape
Some portion of! For I perceive aghast

“The end approaches, while they jeer and jape,
These sons of Shimei: ‘Justify your boast!
What have ye gained from Death by twelve months’
rape?’

“Statesman, what cure hast thou for — least and
most — 580
Popular grievances? What nostrum, say,
Will make the Rich and Poor, expertly dosed,

“Forget disparity, bid each go gay
That, what his bauble, — with his burden, this?
Propose an alkahest shall melt away

"Men's lacquer, show by prompt analysis
Which is the metal, which the make-believe,
So that no longer brass shall find, gold miss

"Coinage and currency? Make haste, retrieve
The precious moments, Master!" Whereunto 590
There snarls an "Ever laughing in thy sleeve,

"Pert Tsaddik? Youth indeed sees plain a clue
To guide man where life's wood is intricate:
How shall he fail to thrud its thickest through

"When every oak-trunk takes the eye? Elate
He goes from bole to brushwood, plunging finds —
Smothered in briars — that the small 's the great!

"All men are men: I would all minds were minds!
Whereas 't is just the many's mindless mass
That most needs helping: laborers and hinds 600

"We legislate for — not the cultured class
Which law-makes for itself nor needs the whip
And bridle, — proper help for mule and ass,

"Did the brutes know! In vain our statesmanship
Strives at contenting the rough multitude:
Still the ox cries "'T is me thou shouldst equip

"'With equine trappings!' or, in humbler mood,
'Cribful of corn for me! and, as for work —
Adequate rumination o'er my food!'

"Better remain a Poet! Needs it irk 610
Such an one if light, kindled in his sphere,
Fail to transfuse the Mizraim cold and murk

“Round about Goshen? Though light disappear,
Shut inside, — temporary ignorance
Got outside of, lo, light emerging clear

“Shows each astonished starrer the expanse
Of heaven made bright with knowledge! That’s
the way,
The only way — I see it at a glance —

“To legislate for earth! As poet. . . . Stay?
What is . . . I would that . . . were it . . . I
had been . . . 620
O sudden change, as if my arid clay

“Burst into bloom! . . .” “A change indeed, I
ween,
And change the last!” sighed Tsaddik as he kissed
The closing eyelids. “Just as those serene

“Princes of Night apprised me! Our acquist
Of life is spent, since corners only four
Hath Aisch, and each in turn was made desist

“In passage round the Pole (O Mishna’s lore —
Little it profits here!) by strenuous tug
Of friends who eked out thus to full fourscore 630

“The Rabbi’s years. I see each shoulder shrug!
What have we gained? Away the Bier may roll!
To-morrow, when the Master’s grave is dug,

“In with his body I may pitch the scroll
I hoped to glorify with, text and gloss,
My Science of Man’s Life: one blank’s the whole!

“Love, war, song, statesmanship — no gain, all loss,
The stars’ bestowment! We on our return
To-morrow merely find — not gold but dross, 639

“The body not the soul. Come, friends, we learn
At least thus much by our experiment —
That — that . . . well, find what, whom it may
concern!”

But next day through the city rumors went
Of a new persecution; so, they fled
All Israel, each man, — this time, — from his tent,

Tsaddik among the foremost. When, the dread
Subsiding, Israel ventured back again
Some three months after, to the cave they sped

Where lay the Sage, — a reverential train!
Tsaddik first enters. “What is this I view? 640
The Rabbi still alive? No stars remain

“Of Aisch to stop within their courses. True,
I mind me, certain gamesome boys must urge
Their offerings on me: can it be — one threw

“Life at him and it stuck? There needs the scourge
To teach that urchin manners! Prithee, grant
Forgiveness if we pretermit thy dirge

“Just to explain no friend was ministrant,
This time, of life to thee! Some jackanapes,
I gather, has presumed to foist his scant 640

“Scurvy unripe existence — wilding grapes
Grass-green and sorrel-sour — on that grand wine,
Mighty as mellow, which, so fancy shapes

“May fitly image forth this life of thine
Fed on the last low fattening lees — condensed
Elixir, no milk-mildness of the vine!

“Rightly with Tsaddik wert thou now incensed
Had he been witting of the mischief wrought
When, for elixir, verjuice he dispensed!” 689

And slowly woke, — like Shushan’s flower besought
By over-curious handling to unloose
The curtained secrecy wherein she thought

Her captive bee, mid store of sweets to choose,
Would loll, in gold pavilioned lie unteased,
Sucking on, sated never, — whose, O whose

Might seem that countenance, uplift, all eased
Of old distraction and bewilderment,
Absurdly happy? “How ye have appeased

“The strife within me, bred this whole content,
This utter acquiescence in my past, 690
Present and future life, — by whom was lent

“The power to work this miracle at last, —
Exceeds my guess. Though — *ignorance confirmed*
By knowledge sounds like paradox, I cast

“Vainly about to tell you — fitlier termed —
Of calm struck by encountering opposites,
Each nullifying either! Henceforth wormed

“From out my heart is every snake that bites
The dove that else would brood there: doubt,
which kills
With hiss of ‘What if sorrows end delights?’ 690

“Fear which stings ease with ‘Work the Master wills!’

Experience which coils round and strangles quick
Each hope with ‘Ask the Past if hoping skills

“‘To work accomplishment, or proves a trick
Wiling thee to endeavor! Strive, fool, stop
Nowise, so live, so die — that’s law! why kick

“‘Against the pricks?’ All out-wormed! Slumber,
drop
Thy films once more and veil the bliss within!
Experience strangle hope? Hope waves a-top 690

“Her wings triumphant! Come what will, I win,
Whoever loses! Every dream’s assured
Of soberest fulfilment. Where’s a sin

“Except in doubting that the light, which lured
The unwary into darkness, meant no wrong
Had I but marched on bold, nor paused immured

“By mists I should have pressed thro’, passed
along
My way henceforth rejoicing? Not the boy’s
Passionate impulse he conceits so strong,

“Which, at first touch, truth, bubble-like, destroys, —
Not the man’s slow conviction ‘Vanity 710
Of vanities — alike my griefs and joys!’

“Ice! — thawed (look up) each bird, each insect
by —
(Look round) by all the plants that break in bloom,
(Look down) by every dead friend’s memory

“That smiles ‘Am I the dust within my tomb?’
Not either, but both these — amalgam rare —
Mix in a product, not from Nature’s womb,

“But stuff which He the Operant — who shall dare
Describe His operation? — strikes alive
And thaumaturgic. I nor know nor care 720

“How from this tohu-bohu — hopes which dive,
And fears which soar — faith, ruined through and
through
By doubt, and doubt, faith treads to dust — revive

“In some surprising sort, — as see, they do! —
Not merely foes no longer but fast friends.
What does it mean unless — O strange and new

“Discovery! — this life proves a wine-press —
blends
Evil and good, both fruits of Paradise,
Into a novel drink which — who intends

“To quaff, must bear a brain for ecstasies 730
Attempered, not this all-inadequate
Organ which, quivering within me, dies

“ — Nay, lives! — what, how, — too soon, or else
too late —
I was — I am . . . ” (“He babbleth!” Tsaddik
mused)

“O Thou Almighty who canst re-instate

“Truths in their primal clarity, confused
By man’s perception, which is man’s and made
To suit his service, — how, once disabused

“Of reason which sees light half shine half shade,
Because of flesh, the medium that adjusts 740
Purity to his visuals, both an aid

“And hindrance, — how to eyes earth’s air encrusts,
When purged and perfect to receive truth’s beam
Pouring itself on the new sense it trusts

“With all its plenitude of power, — how seen
The intricacies now, of shade and shine,
Oppugnant natures — Right and Wrong, we deem

“Irreconcilable? O eyes of mine,
Freed now of imperfection, ye avail
To see the whole sight, nor may uncombine 760

“Henceforth what, erst divided, caused you quail —
So huge the chasm between the false and true,
The dream and the reality! All hail,

“Day of my soul’s deliverance — day the new,
The never-ending! What though every shape
Whereon I wreaked my yearning to pursue

“Even to success each semblance of escape
From my own bounded self to some all-fair
All-wise external fancy, proved a rape

“Like that old giant’s, feigned of fools — on air, 760
Not solid flesh? How otherwise? To love —
That lesson was to learn not here — but there —

“On earth, not here! ‘T is there we learn, — there
prove
Our parts upon the stuff we needs must spoil,
Striving at mastery, there bend above

“The spoiled clay potsherds, many a year of toil
 Attests the potter tried his hand upon,
 Till sudden he arose, wiped free from soil

“His hand cried ‘So much for attempt — anon
 Performance! Taught to mould the living vase, 770
 What matter the cracked pitchers dead and gone?’

“Could I impart and could thy mind embrace
 The secret, Tsaddik!” “Secret none to me!”
 Quoth Tsaddik, as the glory on the face

Of Jochanan was quenched. “The truth I see
 Of what that excellence of Judah wrote,
 Doughty Halaphta. This a case must be

“Wherein, though the last breath have passed the
 throat,
 So that ‘The man is dead’ we may pronounce,
 Yet is the Ruach — (thus do we denote 780

“The imparted Spirit) — in no haste to bounce
 From its entrusted Body, — some three days
 Lingers ere it relinquish to the pounce

“Of hawk-clawed Death his victim. Further says
 Halaphta, ‘Instances have been, and yet
 Again may be, when saints, whose earthly ways

“Tend to perfection, very nearly get
 To heaven while still on earth: and, as a fine
 Interval shows where waters pure have met 780

“Waves brackish, in a mixture, sweet with brine,
 That’s neither sea nor river but a taste
 Of both — so meet the earthly and divine

“‘And each is either.’ Thus I hold him graced —
Dying on earth, half inside and half out,
Wholly in heaven, who knows? My mind embraced

“Thy secret, Jochanan, how dare I doubt?
Follow thy Ruach, let earth, all it can,
Keep of the leavings!” Thus was brought about

The sepulture of Rabbi Jochanan: 799
Thou hast him, — sinner-saint, live-dead, boy-man, —
Schip haz, on Bendimir, in Farzistan!

NOTE. — This story can have no better authority than that of the treatise, existing dispersedly in fragments of Rabbinical writing, *משור של רבים ברים*, from which I might have helped myself more liberally. Thus, instead of the simple reference to “Moses’ stick,” — but what if I make amends by attempting three illustrations, when some thirty might be composed on the same subject, equally justifying that pithy proverb *לא קם במשה* ממשה עד משה.

I

MOSES the Meek was thirty cubits high,
The staff he strode with — thirty cubits long:
And when he leapt, so muscular and strong
Was Moses that his leaping neared the sky
By thirty cubits more: we learn thereby
He reached full ninety cubits — am I wrong? —
When, in a fight slurred o’er by sacred song,
With staff outstretched he took a leap to try
The just dimensions of the giant Og.
And yet he barely touched — this marvel lacked 10
Posterity to crown earth’s catalogue
Of marvels — barely touched — to be exact —
The giant’s ankle-bone, remained a frog
That fain would match an ox in stature: fact!

II

And this same fact has met with unbelief!
 How saith a certain traveller? "Young, I chanced
 To come upon an object — if thou canst,
 Guess me its name and nature! 'T was, in brief,
 White, hard, round, hollow, of such length, in chief,
 — And this is what especially enhanced 20
 My wonder — that it seemed, as I advanced,
 Never to end. Bind up within thy sheaf
 Of marvels, this — Posterity! I walked
 From end to end, — four hours walked I, who go
 A goodly pace, — and found — I have not balked
 Thine expectation, Stranger? Ay or No?
 'T was but Og's thigh-bone, all the while, I stalked
 Alongside of: respect to Moses, though!"

III

Og's thigh-bone — if ye deem its measure strange,
 Myself can witness to much length of shank 30
 Even in birds. Upon a water's bank
 Once halting, I was minded to exchange
 Noon heat for cool. Quoth I "On many a grange
 I have seen storks perch — legs both long and lank:
 Yon stork's must touch the bottom of this tank,
 Since on its top doth wet no plume derange
 Of the smooth breast. I'll bathe there!" "Do not
 so!"
 Warned me a voice from heaven. "A man let drop
 His axe into that shallow rivulet —
 As thou accountest — seventy years ago: 40
 It fell and fell and still without a stop
 Keeps falling, nor has reached the bottom yet."

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE

NEVER the time and the place
 And the loved one all together!
 This path — how soft to pace!
 This May — what magic weather!
 Where is the loved one's face?
 In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,
 But the house is narrow, the place is bleak
 Where, outside, rain and wind combine
 With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
 With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek, 10
 With a malice that marks each word, each sign!
 O enemy sly and serpentine,
 Uncoil thee from the waking man!
 Do I hold the Past
 Thus firm and fast
 Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
 This path so soft to pace shall lead
 Thro' the magic of May to herself indeed!
 Or narrow if needs the house must be,
 Outside are the storms and strangers: we — 20
 Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she,
 — I and she!

PAMBO

SUPPOSE that we part (work done, comes play)
 With a grave tale told in crambo
 — As our hearty sires were wont to say —
 Whereof the hero is Pambo?

Do you happen to know who Pambo was?
 Nor I — but this much have heard of him:
 He entered one day a college-class,
 And asked — was it so absurd of him? —

“May Pambo learn wisdom ere practise it?
 In wisdom I fain would ground me: 10
 Since wisdom is centred in Holy Writ,
 Some psalm to the purpose expound me!”

“That psalm,” the Professor smiled, “shall be
 Untroubled by doubt which dirtieth
 Pellucid streams when an ass like thee
 Would drink there — the Nine-and-thirtieth.

“Verse first: *I said I will look to my ways
 That I with my tongue offend not.*
 How now? Why stare? Art struck in amaze?
 Stop, stay! The smooth line hath an end knot! 20

“He’s gone! — disgusted my text should prove
 Too easy to need explaining?
 Had he waited, the blockhead might find I move
 To matter that pays remaining!”

Long years went by, when — “Ha, who’s this?
 Do I come on the restive scholar
 I had driven to Wisdom’s goal, I wis,
 But that he slipped the collar?”

“What? Arms crossed, brow bent, thought-
 immersed?
 A student indeed! Why scruple 30
 To own that the lesson proposed him first
 Scarce suited so apt a pupil?”

“Come back! From the beggarly elements
 To a more recondite issue
 We pass till we reach, at all events,
 Some point that may puzzle . . . Why ‘pish’
 you?”

From the ground looked piteous up the head:

“Daily and nightly, Master,
Your pupil plods thro’ that text you read,
Yet gets on never the faster. 40

“At the self-same stand, — now old, then young!
I will look to my ways — were doing
As easy as saying! — *that I with my tongue*
Offend not — and ’scape pooh-pooing

“From sage and simple, doctor and dunce?
Ah, nowise! Still doubts so muddy
The stream I would drink at once, — but once!
That — thus I resume my study!”

Brother, brother, I share the blame,
Arcades sumus ambo! 50
Darkling, I keep my sunrise-aim,
Lack not the critic’s flambeau,
And *look to my ways*, yet, much the same,
Offend with my tongue — like Pambo!

NOTES

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

Agamemnon opens with the speech of a watchman. He has been stationed on the palace roof for a year looking out for the beacon which, according to Klutaimnestra's plan, is to bring news of the fall of Troy. His mutterings and forebodings are cut short by the flare of the beacon, and, as he shouts the news, he intimates that his sympathies are with King Agamemnon, and that he might say more but will not. A Choros of Elders then rehearses the history of the departure of the Greeks for Troy, ten years before, making significant remarks upon Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter in order to secure favorable winds for the expedition to bring back his brother's captured wife, the deed in which the play is rooted, for that wrong still rankles in Klutaimnestra's breast. Queen Klutaimnestra, entering, surprises the Elders with the announcement that Troy was taken that night. They cannot believe it, and question how she could have heard of it so quickly. After hearing her story of the chain of beacon fires that brought the news, and her vivid picture of the sacking of the city, they revert to events of the past concerning Helen's capture, and are still doubtful of the Queen's news till a Herald entering announces the King's return. Agamemnon entering is received obsequiously by the Queen, and, yielding to her wishes, passes over the purple robes spread in his path to honor him, and enters the palace. Cassandra, King Priam's daughter, now a captive in Agamemnon's train, then prophesies his impending doom; a shriek is heard from within, but the Choros

of many minds, confused, still hesitates; the Queen re-enters and exultingly declares that she has killed the King, and mingles with the lamentations of the Choros her boast of her successful coalition with Aigisthos. Aigisthos then enters, and he and the Choros mutually exasperate each other till the Queen intervenes, deprecating further violence and establishing her will.

Of Browning's translation of the "Agamemnon," one of the most competent and unprejudiced of classicists Mahaffy, in his "History of Classic Greek Literature" (1891, vol. i. part ii. p. 44), says: "Robert Browning has given us an over-faithful version from his matchless hand — matchless, I conceive, in conveying the deeper spirit of the Greek poets. But in this instance he has outdone his original in ruggedness, owing to his excess of conscience as a translator."

Line 3. *The Atreidai*: the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaos.

9. *Troia*: Troy, or Ilion (see 28), the city of Asia Minor to which Alexandros (see 59), or Paris, the King of Troy's son, carried off Helen, the wife of Menelaos, and which the Greeks were in consequence besieging.

11. *Man's-way-planning*, etc.: so prevails the Queen's bold way of doing a man's business with a woman's sanguine imagination.

32. *Thrice-six*: the highest throw in gambling, three dice being used in the game common in Attica.

35. *On tongue a big ox has trodden*: this is thought to be a Greek proverbial expression, possibly also signifying that not merely a heavy weight but a bribe keeps him mum.

39. *Priamos' great match*: King Priam of Troy's pair of antagonists, Agamemnon, King of the Argives, and his brother.

44. *Clamoring "Ares"*: shouting for war, — "Ares" being the Greek name for the god of war, — like vultures whose nest has been robbed.

52. *Apollon, Pan or Zeus*: gods of the Sun, the Earth,

or the Heavens who have power to employ the punishing power, the *Erinus* (see 57) to avenge wrong; Zeus, as "Guardian of the guest," sending the two Kings to avenge the wrong done Menelaos by Alexandros when as his guest he robbed him of his wife.

65. *Danaoi*: a name given to the people of Argos and to all the Greeks. — *Troes*: the Trojans.

85. *Tundareus*: king of Lacedæmon, who married Leda, mother of Helen as well as Klutaimnestra.

112. *Teukris land*: the land of Teucer, founder of Troy.

114. "*Achaian's two-throned empery*": the brother-kings' dominion over the people of Achaia, or Greece.

122. *Linos*: a legendary young poet and musician, son of Apollo, whose mother was forced to abandon him to be brought up by shepherds, and who was torn in pieces by dogs. He became typical, like Adonis and Hyacinth, of life cut off untimely, or of the youth of the year perishing with the dog-days. In his honor a festival of children and mourning mothers was held every year, when the "Linos-song" was sung, this dirge becoming an emblem of lamentation, and the word *Linos* equivalent to "Woe!"

138. *The virgin Artemis*: the kindly goddess who cared for all mothers, whether beast or human, and who is here supposed to resent the eagles' feast on the mother-hare, the portent of the chieftains' sacrifice of Iphigenia, and yet to have needed propitiating by that sacrifice, lest she, the unmarried huntress-god, hold back the ships of these Greek husbands.

153. *Iēos Paian*: Apollo, the brother of Artemis, the merciful god, powerful to avert his sister's ill-will.

164. *That old children's fate*: refers to the feast of Thuestes, ancestor of the house of Atreus, whose brother slew his children and gave them to their father at a banquet. From this old woe a new woe of the same sort is bred. See later references to this, 1645 foll.

165. *Kalchas*: the Greek soothsayer or "prudent army prophet" (see 124), who interpreted the omen of the birds and the hare and decreed the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

180. *Whosoever was the great of yore . . . and who it was that after came to be*: the gods before Zeus; Uranos, and then Cronos.

204. *Kalchis*: a town in Eubœa, near Athens.

205. *Aulis*: a town opposite on the mainland. — *Winds which post from Strumon*: adverse winds blowing across the Ægean from the Strumonic Gulf of Thrace, northeast from Aulis.

278. *The Apian land*: land of the Argives; so called from Apis, a physician who was said to have freed it from monsters. See Æschylus, "The Suppliants," line 259.

302. *Hephaistos*: the god of fire. — *Idæ*: Mount Ida, near Troy.

305. *Lemnos*, an island westward from Troy in the Ægean Sea.

306. *The Athoan summit*: Mount Athos on the Peninsula of Macedonia.

310. *Makistos*: a mountain of Eubœa.

313. *Euripos*: the strait between Eubœa and Bœotia.

314. *Messapios*: on the coast of Bœotia.

318. *Asopos*: over the plains of the Asopos River in Bœotia.

319. *Mount Kithairon*: in the southern part of Bœotia.

323. *Lake Gorgopis*: a bay of the Corinthian Gulf.

324. *Mount Aigioplanktos*: in Megaris.

329. *Strait Saronic*: in the Saronic Gulf.

331. *Mount Arachnaios*: a few miles from Argos and visible from the palace.

334. *Rules prescribed*, etc.: in the Lampadephorìa or torch-race games, described by Pausanias, i. 30, 2.

381. *Ate*: the goddess of revenge.

438. *Aphrodite*: the goddess of love.

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS 303

533. *Puthian*: Apollo.

535. *Skamandros*: a river of Troas.

560. *Priamidai*: the descendants of Priam.

635. *Bronze-dippings*: the dipping or tempering of bronze, an art familiar to blacksmiths, but an unknown mystery to a Queen.

668. *Erinues*: the Furies.

681. *Helios*: the sun.

690. *Water-Haides*: another world of sea.

712. *Zephuros*: the west wind.

717. *Simois*: a river in Troas, rises in Mount Ida and flows into the Xanthus.

830. *The Argeian monster*: the wooden horse by means of which Troy was taken. *Odyssey*, iv. 353; *Æneid*, ii.

832. *The Pleiads*: the Constellation of seven stars so named for the seven daughters of Atlas.

876. *Triple-bodied Geruon*: fabled to have three bodies and three heads: it was one of Herakles' seven labors to kill him.

887. *Strophios the phokian*: with whom Klutaimnestra's son Orestes found refuge.

1034. *Alkmené's child*: Herakles.

1055. *Kars*: mutes.

1066. *Otototoi*: alas!

1068. *Loxias*: a name for Apollo.

1112. *Papai, papai*: O strange! wonderful!

1159. *Itus*, or *Itys*: Philomela changed into a nightingale and ever telling her sad tale of her sister's son Itus. *Odyssey*, xix. 518.

1172. *Orthian style*: crying out like the Spartan boys who are flogged at the altar of Artemis.

1179. *Kokutos and Acheron*: rivers of the underworld; Kokutos river of wailing, Acheron river of woe.

1258. *Some amphisbaina*: double goer, a serpent with heads at both ends. — *Skulla*: a sea-monster. *Odyssey*, xii. 85–100.

1281. *Lukeion*: a name for Apollo.

1336. *Surian*: Syrian.

1476. *Chruseids*: daughters of Chryses. *Iliad*, i. 133-144.

1481. *Swan-fashion . . . dying*: see "Phædo," 85 — Because the swans are sacred to Apollo, and have the gift of prophecy . . . therefore they sing and rejoice "when they die, anticipating the good things of another world."

1514. *Tantalidai*: descendants of Tantalus, father of Pelops, who was father of Thuestes.

1627. *Daimon of the Pleisthenidai*: the genius of the family of Pleisthenes, father of Tantalos, ancestor of Agamemnon.

1649. *Thuestes*: son of Pelops, brother of Atreus.

1661. *Pelopidai*: descendants of Pelops, son of Tantalus.

LA SAISIAZ

The Prologue is a lyrical expression of a soul disengaged by death from the body, disporting itself in freedom from any of its old annoyances while the body finds pleasurable rest in its native earth.

La Saisiaz commemorates the sudden death of a friend with whom Browning had intended to climb Mount Salève; relates his own ascent alone, five days later, in fulfilment of the plan she had cherished; and, recalling the associations of her last days, inquires what proof there is that the soul survives the body, and how much or how little assurance there is in his own faith in the life beyond death.

To put such a question to himself is to assume that he can answer it, and he declares, therefore, that the twofold consciousness thus implied of self-existence and other-existence — the one called "soul," the other "God" — constitute his only facts, the proof of them as facts consisting in their surpassing his power to prove them such.

For facts beyond these there is no further proof that

does not involve surmises which cannot endure probing. God's goodness, wisdom, and power, or man's need urged as reasons for a future life, all arouse counter-objections which force him to give them up and hold to self-consciousness as already caused and itself effective of all its experiences and conclusions, and thereby satisfactory to itself, although not so to be assumed for any other personality, each being sufficient only for itself. Thence his general assumption that every mortal has a world of his own, and the supposition that God's world on the infinite plane inheres to God as necessarily as man's to man on his plane.

His own conviction is that there is no reconciliation of wisdom, goodness, and power with imperfection, evil, and failure if earth life and time be not man's learning-space. This conviction, however, he acknowledges is conditioned on his own personality; and the desire for a more objective assurance of a future life and a meeting with his friend is met by a silence which permits hope and fear equally; surmise beyond this fact being vain, from the fact alone comes the better assurance. The solitary soul — *i. e.*, the mere consciousness of self-existence — stands as umpire between the surmises of Fancy and the conclusions of Reason as to what would be the consequences in life if all were as Fancy would have it. Fancy surmises that not only is there God and Soul now, but also a better life after death. Reason, taking this as a fact, proceeds to see how it will work, and concludes that man will decide to die at once for the sake of a better future life. Fancy then finds it necessary to affirm punishment to him who curtails life, reward for who lives out his term. Reason concludes in that case that, whether actively or passively employed, this life is worth nothing but to wait for the next. Fancy is forced, then, to suppose that gain or loss in the next life depends on good or evil done in this. Reason thereupon shows that it takes the quality of goodness

or evil away from a man's act to make his future welfare dependent upon his present well-doing; for he either does what he must do, if he must, or if the law is not so stringent eludes it if he may; or what sort of law is it which is subject to man's will and pleasure? Whereas, were it simply a question not of an imposed law, but merely of the existence of God and soul, it is a sufficient hypothesis that the soul's earthly life-allotment is its exercise-ground. Thus, step by step, Fancy conducts Reason back to the mere fact, authorizing equally with fear the hope in which the poet puts his faith.

Conviction, being personal, is stronger and more influential in some men than in others; and as in looking down from Mount Salève, the poet stands within hail of places associated with Rousseau, Byron, Gibbon, and Voltaire, — each of whom impressed his peculiar point of view upon the world, — the idea of the influence Fame wielded suggests to him the image of a colossal beacon — such as brought the news of the fall of Troy — made up of the solid knowledge of a Gibbon, the writhing snake-fire wit of a Voltaire, the resinous brilliancy of a Rousseau, and the resistless poetic gift of a Byron, and he craves the power to uplift such a mighty torch of influence over the multitude. Although aware that here and there an independent mind would distinguish between proof and persuasion, he would enable those who needed such help to rest confidently upon his sufficient faith in Soul and God.

In conclusion, he describes the impulse that came to him in London to follow out the chain of thought more hotly forged at Salève. That experience he has here saved and expressed. Of other such experiences, more deeply rooted in his life, which would cost him too great an upheaval to evoke, this is but an indication.

A. E. S. September 14, 1877: Ann Egerton Smith, died September 14, 1877, while with Browning and his sister at a villa in the mountains near Geneva called

“La Saisiaz,” which in the Savoyard dialect means “The Sun.”

The germ of “La Saisiaz” appears in a letter Browning sent a year earlier to a correspondent who, thinking she was about to die, wrote to thank the poet for the spiritual cheer his poems, especially “Rabbi ben Ezra” and “Abt Vogler,” had given her. The purely personal nature of faith, and the power of genius to lead and persuade the bulk of mankind to believe as it believes, are the ideas of “La Saisiaz,” which come out in Browning’s reply to her:—

“19 WARWICK CRESCENT, W., May 11, 1876.

“DEAR FRIEND, — It would ill become me to waste a word on my own feelings, except inasmuch as they can be common to us both in such a situation as you describe yours to be, — and which, by sympathy, I can make mine by the anticipation of a few years at most. It is a great thing — the greatest — that a human being should have passed the probation of life, and sum up its experience in a witness to the power and love of God. I dare congratulate you. All the help I can offer, in my poor degree, is the assurance that I see ever more reason to hold by the same hope, and that by no means in ignorance of what has been advanced to the contrary; and for your sake I would wish it to be true that I had so much of ‘genius’ as to permit the testimony of an especially privileged insight to come in aid of the ordinary argument. For I know I myself have been aware of the communication of something more subtle than a ratiocinative process, when the convictions of ‘genius’ have thrilled my soul to its depth, as when Napoleon, shutting up the New Testament, said of Christ, ‘Do you know that I am an understander of men? Well, He was no man!’ (‘Savez-vous que je me connais en hommes? Eh bien, celui-là ne fut pas un homme.’) Or as when Charles Lamb, in a gay fancy with some friends as to how he

and they would feel if the greatest of the dead were to appear suddenly in flesh and blood once more, on the final suggestion, 'And if Christ entered this room?' changed his manner at once, and stuttered out, — as his manner was when moved, — 'You see, if Shakespeare entered we should all rise; if *He* appeared, we must kneel.' Or, not to multiply instances, as when Dante wrote what I will transcribe from my wife's Testament, wherein I recorded it fourteen years ago, — 'Thus I believe, thus I affirm, thus I am certain it is, that from this life I shall pass to another better, there, where that lady lives of whom my soul was enamoured.' " — *Poet-lore*, February, 1890.

24. *Collonge*: a small town in Switzerland, near Geneva.

37. *Salève*: a mountain southeast of Geneva, whence a view may be gained of Jura and the whole Mont Blanc chain of mountains.

80. *The Marshal's next move . . . Gambetta's counter-play*: the news current at the time of the poem was of the political contest between Marshal Macmahon (1808–1893), then President of the French Republic, and Léon Gambetta (1838–1882), the leader of the Radicals against the reactionary policy and royalist sympathies of the President. Gambetta was arraigned and condemned to three months' imprisonment and a fine of 4,000 francs, but was immediately re-elected to the Assembly and successful in forcing Macmahon's resignation in 1879.

97. *Mazy Arve*: the Arve River, which flows into Lake Geneva.

104. *Calvin*: John (1509–1564), theological reformer and preacher as well as professor of divinity at Geneva.

212. *Phrase the solemn Tuscan fashioned*: Dante's words concerning Beatrice, "Convito," ii. 9, cited in Browning's letter (see above).

353. *Job-like, etc.*: Job ii. 7, 8.

419. *Such grudge in God as scared the ancient Greek:* "The divinity is always jealous and delights in confusion," said Solon, according to Herodotus, i. 32; and Aischulos speaks of the "ancient saying," "From good fortune buds forth insatiate woe." See Browning's translation of the "Agamemnon," this edition, lines 766-772.

546. *Athanasius contra mundum:* Athanasius against the world. Saint Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, born about 297. Defender of the Trinitarianism of the Nicene Creed against the Arian heresy, so prevalent then that, in the words of Hooker, it was "Athanasius against the whole world."

553. *Bossex:* where Rousseau was born, Jean Jacques (1712-1778), whose "Émile," a moral romance, advocated as an educational reform a return to nature; his strictures against civilized life are summed up by Browning in the dictum, "All that's good is gone and past," etc. (See 561.)

555. *Diodati:* a villa on the Lake of Geneva, where lived the poet Byron, George Gordon (1788-1824), who left England vowing never to return to it, and whose contempt for man and praise of Nature are indicated in "Dying day with dolphin-hues!" etc. (564-570). The maxim "Of all objects," etc. (568-570), is an allusion to "Childe Harold," which was written by Byron at the villa Diodati.

579. *Pine-tree of Makistos:* from Makistos, the highest point in Eubœa, the light of the chain of beacons bringing news across the Ægean Sea of the fall of Troy, was watched for, as described in the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus (see Browning's translation in this edition, "Agamemnon," lines 302-310), and thence the "pine-tree" torch message was carried to the mainland. Such a giant torch of faith would the poet brandish if he could concentrate in one flame the power belonging to the fame of Rousseau's eloquence, Byron's genius, Gibbon's knowledge, and Voltaire's wit.

582. *Lausanne*: the town in Switzerland where the historian Gibbon, Edward (1737-1794), pursued his studies as a young man, and whither he returned later, completing there his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

583. *The aspic*, — *sparkles . . . and now condensed, the python*: the subtle little serpent known as the asp or aspic, and the huge king of snakes, the python, symbolize here the insinuating brilliancy of Wit which Voltaire supplies to the imagined torch, and they picture, also, both the snapping of fire in the boughs of a pine-tree and the whirls of flame round its trunk almost hiding the solid glowing core of fire representing the pillar of solid learning Gibbon furnishes to the torch.

586. *Ferney*: a village near Geneva, where Voltaire, François Marie Arouet (1694-1778), lived for many years.

588. *Terebinth-tree*: the turpentine tree, typical of the quick-flaming element Rousseau's sympathetic diction would supply to the imagined torch-light.

590. *Diodati*: Byron. "Here called 'Diodati' by that form of metonymy in which a man takes the name of his residence," says Charles Malloy, who first set right, in "The Significance of the Brand Flamboyant in 'La Saisiaz'" (*Poet-lore*, May, 1898), the errors of Dr. Berdoe concerning this poem.

DRAMATIC IDYLS

Martin Relph tells a story, just as the speaker used to hear his grandfather tell it, of a queer old man who took up his stand every year on a hill outside the town to confess in anguish to the crowd gathered about him the crucial experience of his life, when as a young man he stood there with a throng of villagers to see a girl shot as a spy. After the captain's bullying harangue, as the soldiers level their guns at the girl, and the

crowd is rapt, he alone sees the desperate advance of a belated man bringing a pardon, and fails to cry out and save the girl before she is shot down and the man — her lover — has dropped dead in an agony of despair. He craves the comforting excuses his hearers make for him, and is anxious to believe that he was only scared or dazed, but he both knows and feigns that he does not know that it was a spasm of envy and jealousy which kept him from saving the lovers, and that made him in that instant their murderer.

5. *Methuselah*: Genesis v. 27.

29. *A quarrel . . . between King George and his foes*: George II. is probably the King George meant, and the quarrel the rebellion, 1740-1745, of the "Young Pretender" of the Stuart family, Charles Edward.

134. *For "Vincent" . . . sounds French*: Charles Edward's attempt to win the English throne was befriended by the French, who were therefore regarded with suspicion.

Pheidippides is founded on an historical legend told by the Greek historian Herodotus, the dry bones of which Browning has clothed with life. Instead of a sketch of bare events, *Pheidippides* himself is made to relate to the archons of Athens his own experiences and emotions as he went on his errand to Sparta for aid to Athens, and on his way back met the great god Pan, who promised Athens aid. The incident of Pan's offering him a worthy reward, and of his last run to Athens to announce the victory of Marathon, is added by the poet.

"And first, before they left the city, the generals sent off to Sparta a herald, one *Pheidippides*, who was by birth an Athenian, and by birth and practice a trained runner. This man, according to the account which he gave to the Athenians on his return, when he was near Mount Parthenium, above Tegea, fell in with the god Pan, who called him by his name, and bade him ask the Athenians 'wherefore they neglected

him so entirely, when he was kindly disposed towards them, and had often helped them in times past, and would do so again in time to come?' The Athenians, entirely believing in the truth of this report, as soon as their affairs were once more in good order, set up a temple to Pan under the Acropolis, and, in return for the message which I have recorded, established in his honor yearly sacrifices and a torch-race.

"On the occasion of which we speak, when Pheidippides was sent by the Athenian generals, and, according to his own account, saw Pan on his journey, he reached Sparta on the very next day after quitting the city of Athens. Upon his arrival he went before the rulers, and said to them:—

"'Men of Lacedæmon, the Athenians beseech you to hasten to their aid, and not allow that state, which is the most ancient in all Greece, to be enslaved by the barbarians. Eretria, look you, is already carried away captive, and Greece weakened by the loss of no mean city.'

"Thus did Pheidippides deliver the message committed to him. And the Spartans wished to help the Athenians, but were unable to give them any present succor, as they did not like to break their established law. It was the ninth day of the first decade, and they could not march out of Sparta on the ninth, when the moon had not reached the full. So they waited for the full of the moon." (*Herodotus*, translated by Rawlinson, vi.)

Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν: Rejoice; we conquer!

4. *Her of the ægis and spear*: Athene (Minerva), who was represented with a shield and spear.

5. *Ye of the bow*, etc.: Artemis (Diana).

8. *Pan*: the god of woods and fields, of flocks and shepherds. He dwelt in caves, wandered on the mountains and in valleys, played with nymphs, and so on. He was represented as having the horns and hoofs of a goat, which caused many to be frightened at his ap-

pearance; hence the word "panic." It is said he won the fight at Marathon by causing a panic among the Persians.

9. *Tettix*: a grasshopper. Golden grasshoppers were worn by the Athenians to signify that they were the descendants of the original inhabitants of the country, these insects being supposed to spring from the ground.

12. *Reach Sparta*: at the southernmost part of Hellas, 135 to 140 miles from Athens.

18. *Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute*: Darius (493 B. C.) sent heralds into all parts of Greece to require, according to the custom of the Persians when they wished to exact submission, earth and water.

19. *Eretria*: one of the principal cities of the island of Eubœa.

20. *Hellas*: Greece.

32. *Phoibos*: Apollo.

33. *Olumpos*: the home of the gods.

47. *Filleted victim*: it was the custom to adorn sacrificial victims with ribbons and wreaths. — *Fulsome*: lavish, liberal.

52. *Parnes*: an error, these mountains being in the north of Attica, outside the route of Pheidippides.

62. *Erebos*: the mysterious darkness under earth.

87. *We stand no more on the razor's edge*: a Greek proverbial expression for extreme peril.

89. *Miltiades*: (died 489), the Greek general who commanded the Athenians at the battle of Marathon, fought 490 B. C.

106. *Akropolis*: the citadel of Athens.

109. *Fennel-field*: in Greek, *Marathon*: and Pan meant when he gave Pheidippides the bunch of fennel to signify the place where the victory would be won.

Halbert and Hob is a story of hereditary heartlessness, a father and son repeating in their lives the brutalization and social isolation of the father and son preceding them, and re-echoing, to the very hour and place, the quarrel of a generation earlier: but with the

repetition of violence there is an inner force that also stirs again, the father's memory of the quarrel with his father unnerving him and moving him to make an effectual appeal to his son to hear the inner voice and pause, as he had paused. Turning, side by side, the two silently await the stroke of death that comes by morning to the father and to the son a palsy of remorse; the "reason *in* nature for these hard hearts" being shown thus to be accompanied by a reason *beyond* nature for their sudden softening.

The poem was suggested by an incident cited in Aristotle's "Ethics," vii. 6: "Anger and asperity are more natural than excessive and unnecessary desires. Thus one who was accused of striking his father said, as an apology for it, that his own father, and even his grandfather, had struck him; 'and he also' (pointing to his child) 'will strike me, when he becomes a man; for it runs in our family.' A certain person, also, being dragged by his son, bid him stop at the door, for he himself had dragged his father as far as that."

65. "*Is there a reason in nature for these hard hearts?*" *O Lear*: "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" "*Lear*," iii. 6, 81.

Ivàn Ivànovitch is a vivid re-picturing of a typical Russian folk-tale. It is cited as an illustration of the way the deft Russian carpenter makes his axe a sufficient tool for any purpose, practical or judicial. Ivàn was exercising his axe on a ship's mast, when sledge-bells announced the arrival of a woman, half dead with fright, who, as soon as she is revived, tells her story of being chased by wolves and having her three children one by one torn from her. Ivàn's axe promptly enacts his sentence upon a mother who permitted herself to survive her children. The village magnates then hear all this at the church porch, and, despite the chief proprietor's demurrer that although to die for others may be applauded, the preservation of self cannot be punished, the priest's decision is accepted that Ivàn

executed God's sentence on selfish motherhood. When they send to tell Ivàn that he is free from any penalty, he is found carving a miniature Kremlin with steady precision. From the finishing touch he turns only to reply, "How otherwise?"

Browning went to Russia in 1833 as nominal Secretary of the Russian Consul-General. This poem and the Russian allusions in "Pauline" seem to be fruits of that visit.

14. *In Peter's time when, etc.*: Peter Alexeievitch I. (1672-1725), Czar of Russia, called the "Great" and "Father of his Country," whose reign was but the beginning of the Europeanizing of Russia continued later by the great Empress Catherine and her successors.

19. *Verst*: about two-thirds of a mile.

28. *This highway broad and straight e'en from the Neva's mouth to Moscow's gates of gold*: probably the original of the present Nevski Prospekt, running nearly in a straight line for four versts from St. Petersburg to the Red Gate and Nicholas statue in Moscow.

35. *Ivàn Ivànovitch*: a common Russian name, meaning literally "Jack father of Jack," popularly accepted as an exemplar of Russian traits, as "Uncle Sam" is of Yankee peculiarities.

48. *Dmìtri*: the same name as Demetrius.

53. *Droug*: Russian for "friend," pronounced "doork."

55. *Mother-kin*: the English equivalent for the Russian diminutive of *màt*, or mother, *màtushka*.

60. *Vàssili*: same name as Basil. The accent should be on the second syllable, Vasili. — *Sergei*: Sergius.

72. *Loukèria, Louscha*: nicknames for Glikeria or Glycera.

135. *Twin-pigeons*: "little pigeon" is a common pet-name; in Russian, *golùbchik*.

136. *Stepàn*: Stephen. *Stiòpka* in the next line and *Stescha*, line 416, are diminutives of the same name.

166. *Teriöschä*: diminutive of Terentii, same name as Terence.

189. *Märpha*: Martha.

226. *Kirill*: Cyril.

279. *Pope*: the *pop*, or priest, of the established church in Russia.

281. *The Commune*: according to Stepniak, some of the old communal customs are still permitted in Russia, a Russian village being not an aggregation but an association of individuals holding their land in common and electing the rural executive administration — *Starost* and *Starshinas*.

282. *Starosta*: overseer; literally, elder, *staröst*, old age.

284. *Pomeschik*: landed proprietor, *pomyëshchik*.

317. *Your young men shall see visions*: Joel ii. 28.

404. *The Sacred Pictures*: the *ikons*, mosaics or paintings, of which there are two at least in every Greek church, — one of Christ at the right of the holy doors, one on the left, of the Theotocos. The ikons carried by the Russian peasants are two or three folding tablets of wood or metal bearing pictures in enamel.

412. *Kremlin*: the historic fortress at Moscow, built in 1156, and made by Peter the Great, who was born there, the palace and coronation-place of the Tsars.

417. *Kätia*: nickname of Katherine, *Yekaterina*.

421. *Kolokol*: the famous bell of the Kremlin, 19 feet high and 60 feet around, weighing 12,000 pounds, whose bigness is not so big that the Russian fancy does not love to make it still bigger in the many popular tales in which it figures. Pronounced *Kölkol*.

Tray is a modern poet's description of a hero, the conventional good knight and wicked desperado of the bards of mediævalism, proving alike less refreshing to the soul than this song of Tray, who rescues a drowning beggar-child, and then does not hesitate to duplicate his exploit and save the child's doll. The last touch in this praise of Tray is the picture of the

unconscious inferiority of one of the laughing bystanders, who so little appreciates the spiritual quality of simple heroism that he proposes to vivisect the hero's brain and locate his valor. A friend of Browning's witnessed the occurrence in Paris.

4. *Eke*: also; from the Anglo-Saxon *écan*, to augment. — *Habergeon*: neck and breast armor, a small hauberk or mail coat, *habergeon* being the diminutive of *hauberk*, which is literally a neck-defence, from Old High German, *hals*, neck; *bergan*, to protect.

Ned Bratts is a dramatic folk-picture of a hot day in an English court-house, the centre of interest being a married pair of scapegraces who come to declare their guilt, and their conversion by John Bunyan, and who ask to be hung at once to save their souls.

"The story of 'Old Tod,' as told in Bunyan's 'Life and Death of Mr. Badman,' was distinctly in my mind," Browning wrote to Dr. Furnivall, "when I wrote 'Ned Bratts,' at the Splugen, without reference to what I had read when quite a boy." A story of a swearing public-house keeper whose name was Ned, told by Bunyan, a few pages farther on in the same volume, may have suggested the name of Ned for Bratts. The part of Bunyan and his daughter in this notable conversion is an invention of Browning's, as are also the grotesque eagerness of the reprobates to save their souls, and the chief-justice's loyal ascription of this marvel not to Bunyan's, but to King Charles's piety.

The story of old Tod is given by Bunyan as follows: —

"At a summer assizes holden at Hertford, while the judge was sitting upon the bench, comes this old Tod into the Court, clothed in a green suit, with his leathern girdle in his hand, his bosom open, and all on a dung sweat, as if he had run for his life; and being come in, he spake aloud, as follows: 'My lord,' said he, 'here is the veriest rogue that breathes upon the face of the earth. I have been a thief from a child: when I was

but a little one, I gave myself to rob orchards and to do other such like wicked things, and I have continued a thief ever since. My lord, there has not been a robbery committed these many years, within so many miles of this place, but I have either been at it, or privy to it.' The judge thought the fellow was mad, but after some conference with some of the justices, they agreed to indict him; and so they did of several felonious actions; to all of which he heartily confessed guilty, and so was hanged, with his wife at the same time."

1. *'T was Bedford*: Bunyan was born in Bedford, and was imprisoned in Bedford jail for preaching without having been ordained. Browning lays his scene there instead of in Hertford, as in the story of old Tod, and makes his poem a Hogarthian presentation of the crude and grossly physical yet sincere English nature on which Bunyan's allegory made so strong an impression.

15. *Chief Justice Jukes*: an imaginary figure. — *Brother Small*: also has no place in biographical records; but both, like the *Serjeant Postlethwayte* of line 43, are picturesquely English in type.

71. *Public*: ale-house for the public.

78. *Quean*: Anglo-Saxon, *Cwén*, a woman; the same word as "queen," but when spelled "quean" used as a term of reproach.

79. *Noggin*: Old English, a cup, here meaning a cupful of liquor.

82. *Midden*: Old English, a dung-hill.

97. *Houghed the mare*: cut the sinews of the hind-leg between the knee and the fetlock; from Anglo-Saxon *hōh*, heel.

102. *The Book*: "The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come, delivered under the Similitude of a Dream," by John Bunyan. London. 1678. Bratts's description of it, — "Don't say book — they 're plays, songs," etc., refers to its dialogue form,

and occasional verse, which contributed to its extraordinary popularity. A second edition was called for within a year, the demand kept up, and 100,000 copies are said to have been sold before Bunyan died in 1688.

111. *Who wrote it in the Jail*: Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" was — until 1885, when another theory was broached — supposed to have been written during his twelve years' imprisonment in Bedford jail (1660–1672). According to the modern theory, however, it was written in the jail on Bedford Bridge, but during a later and shorter imprisonment of six months in 1675–1676.

114. *Gammer*: an old wife; contraction of Anglo-Saxon *gemêder*, godmother. — *A crab on Yule-tide bowl*: an apple roasted in the Christmas ale bowl. "When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl." — Shakespeare's "Love's Labor's Lost," v. 2, 935.

119. *Gaffer*: an old fellow; contraction of *gefâder*, Anglo-Saxon, godfather.

127. *Those laces . . . you know who makes them best — the Tinker . . . pulled-up for gospelling*: while imprisoned in Bedford jail for preaching to a Baptist congregation, the tinker John Bunyan (1628–1688) supported himself and his family by making many hundred gross of long tagged laces.

135. *His girl, — the blind young chit, who hawks about his wares*: his eldest daughter Mary, who was blind, and of whom he was especially fond.

156. *Dives*: Luke xvi. 20, cited by Mr. Interpreter to Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress."

157. *Charles*: the II., restored to the throne of England after Cromwell's death, and reigning from 1660 until 1685.

166. *Dreriment*: an Old English word common in Bunyan's time, but now seldom heard.

170. *Why cumpers it the ground*: Luke xiii. 7.

178. *Tophet*: Isaiah xxx. 33, cited by Christian at the opening of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

180. *Outstreams*: an Old English word for "out-streams," as given in "Pilgrim's Progress." Numbers xx. 10.

181. *Be your sins scarlet, wool shall they seem like*: Isaiah i. 18.

201. *Just-lugged bear*: a bear when first seized and lugged, or led, by a rope tied round its head. "1 Henry IV." i. 2, 83.

203. *Christmas was meant for me. A burden, etc.*: refers to the hero of "Pilgrim's Progress," Christian. Bratts is made to get the name wrong, naturally enough, the jollities of Christmas being familiar. Christian, at the opening of Bunyan's book, fears that "this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the Grave; and I shall fall into Tophet."

204. *Joseph's sack, — or whose it was, — which held the cup*: the recentness of Bratts's biblical knowledge is to blame for his error. He means Benjamin's sack. Genesis xlv. 12.

211. *Slack straps, etc.*: an allusion to Christian's song in "Pilgrim's Progress," —

"Must here the burden fall from off my back?

Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?" etc.

214. *Destruction*: the City of Destruction in Bunyan's book. The *wicket-gate*, 216; *Despond the Slough*, 217; *brave House Beautiful*, 218, are all also allusions to "Pilgrim's Progress," which Bratts has made applicable to his own case in a way to delight the pious author.

222. *The enemy horned and winged*: Apollyon, whom Christian fought with in the valley.

227. *Hopeful*: one of Christian's companions in his progress to Zion.

231. *Did Master Faithful need climb the Delightful Mounts? No, straight to Vanity Fair*: Bunyan makes Faithful suffer execution, and leads him on faster accordingly in his pilgrimage to the Heavenly City than

his companions. His lot Bratts hopes to rival, hanging in St. Peter's Green in Bedford amounting to the same thing as Faithful's martyrdom in the "Market Place;" and Bratts looks forward to Faithful's reward, "chariot pair and all." "Delightful Mounts" is Bratts's name for Bunyan's "Delectable Mountains." Vanity Fair attracted Bratts's fancy more than Bunyan would have liked.

246. *Master Worldly-Wiseman*: a character who did not appear in "Pilgrim's Progress" until the second edition was printed, in 1678.

270. *Sackerson*: a Shakespearian name for a bear. "Merry Wives," i. 1.

273. *The Iron Cage*, — means the *Lost Man*: the backslider who tells Christian how he "was once a fair and flourishing Professor," but "laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts," and is now "a man of Despair" shut up forever "as in this Iron Cage."

292. *Reynard's game, i' feggs!* sly, the game of the fox in faith, "feg" and "feckins" being common English forms of "faith."

303. *Amicus Curix*: friend of the Court.

315. *Twelve years' pious reign*: this fixes the time of the poem as 1672 (see note, 157), the year of Bunyan's release from his twelve years' imprisonment.

316. *Astræa Redux*: the reign of justice restored.

328. *Bunyan's Statue*: a bronze statue of Bunyan by Boehm.

DRAMATIC IDYLS

SECOND SERIES

Prologue. A mocking little thrust of verse at the inconsistency involved in assuming to understand the subtleties of the human soul when there is no agreement of doctors upon the more obvious working of the bodily functions.

Echetlos illustrates the superior worth of a great

deed, in contrast with that of a great name, since a deed can never grow less, while a great name may, as in the case of Miltiades and Themistokles.

The poem is developed from a legend of the battle of Marathon told in Pausanias' "Description of Greece" (book i. chap. 32): "And it chanced, as they say in the battle, that a man of rustic appearance and dress appeared, who slew many of the Persians with a ploughshare, and vanished after the fight: and when the Athenians made enquiry of the oracle, the god gave no other answer, but bade them honor the god *Echtlæus*," — that is, the wielder of the ploughshare.

3. *Marathon*: see notes on "Pheidippides," p. 311.

15. *Kallimachos Polemarch*: Polemarch was the name given to the archon (or ruler, of which there were nine in Athens) who had charge of military affairs; Kallimachos held that office at the time of the battle of Marathon, and was among the brave Greeks who fell.

18. *Sakian*: the *Sakæ* were Scythian tribes bordering on the Bactrians and Sogdians of the East, a part of whom had submitted to pay tribute to Persia.

28. *Woe for the great name Miltiades*: after the battle of Marathon, Miltiades incurred the displeasure of the Athenians by the failure of his siege of the island of Paros, which, it was found, he had undertaken in order to avenge a personal spite. He was indicted and sentenced to pay a fine, but died shortly afterwards of a hurt received at Paros.

29. *Themistokles*: (about 514 B. C. to 449 B. C.), chief archon of Athens. Long prominent for his services both in war and peace, he was at last accused of bribery and ostracized; later, of treason, when he fled from Greece to Artaxerxes, at Sardis, in Persia, who treated him with much favor, making him a satrap or governor.

Clive. An old man's reminiscence of the great English military hero, which suggests the spiritual price paid for the sake of national empire and the ele-

ment of moral cowardice sometimes lurking beneath acts of physical courage. The old man dwells upon his story while he is sitting lonely over his dessert, just as if his son were present and again leading him on to repeat his favorite anecdote of how he once sought to rouse his old friend Clive from his mental stupor by asking him when he himself felt that he had shown most courage. Clive answered that it was when he felt most fear. When a young clerk gaming with military men of rank, he saw his opponent cheat, accused him of it, was challenged, missed his aim, and while he stood at his foe's mercy persisted in his refusal to take back his words. Suddenly his foe confessed the truth and fled. In that moment, while the cold muzzle of the pistol was at his forehead, he had felt the most fear. His friend's objection that the general of Plassy had met death closer than that, he met with a burst of scorn, which showed that another alternative was in his mind at that moment, his foe might have utterly conquered him by refusing to kill him, but disgracing him forever. It was not mere death, then, but defeat, that he feared, — the inability on his own part to meet a crucial situation except by suicide. But to meet a situation thus, objected his friend, takes courage; despair, it might be called, not fear. Clive mutters to himself, "Yes — courage: only fools will call it fear;" and the next week killed himself.

2. *Clive it was gave England India*: Robert Clive, born in Shropshire, 1725; was sent to Madras at eighteen in the service of the East India Company. Home-sick, in debt, and in danger of losing his situation, he twice tried to shoot himself. The pistol failing to go off, he was impressed with the idea that some great destiny was awaiting him. This destiny seemed accomplished when, at twenty-seven, returning to England, he had made the English the first military power in India. But, on his return to India, 1755-1759, he supplemented his first labors by assuring to the English

a political ascendancy as well; and his third visit, 1765-1767, crowned his ruder earlier work by putting the English dominance on a sounder basis of integrity than it could before pretend to claim, and giving it an impulse toward a more spiritual ascendancy.

8. *Fought Plassy, spoiled the clever foreign game*: the main event of Clive's second period in India, when he had to out-intrigue the conspiring Hindoo chiefs and defeat the Nabob of Bengal acting secretly with the French. He was not sure of his Hindoo ally, and was so far outnumbered that the majority of the council of war he called were opposed to fighting, and Clive agreed that the odds were too great; but after an hour of lonely brooding he decided to meet all hazards, and at Plassy, eighty miles north of Calcutta, with the loss of twenty-two killed and fifty wounded, overcame an army of near sixty thousand, and "annexed and Englished" Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa.

16. *Rummer-glass*: a drinking-glass used for Rhine wine. Dr. Rolfe suggests its derivation from such cups being used at the Römersaal at Frankfort, where the new Emperor's health was drunk, in which case the word is Latin, from *Roma*, Rome; but it may be derived from the low German *römer*, the same as roomy or spacious.

40. *Sustained a siege in Arcot*: an exploit of Clive's first period. After the French took Madras, he seized the occasion to leave his commercial life for an ensignship in the Company's service. The French were driving the native chief of the Carnatic into narrower quarters in the interest of the rival prince they were putting in his place. To prevent this and the conquest of all India by the French, Clive urged that he be permitted to attack Arcot, the capital of the province of the Carnatic, seventy miles southwest of Madras. He took it, held it against repeated attacks, and so gave the English the position of supremacy in the province long held by the French.

47. *Too much bee's-wing floats my figure*: a metaphor having a double appropriateness, bee's-wing being the name for a film peculiar to port wine and indicative of its age.

59. *Clive crumbled slow in London*: Macaulay, in his famous essay on Clive, says: "He had not yet passed the season of vigorous bodily and mental exertion. But clouds had long been gathering over his mind. . . . From early youth he had been subject to fits of that strange melancholy 'which rejoiceth exceedingly and is glad when it can find the grave.'" "

65. *Where a drug-box skulked*: "To obtain ease," writes Macaulay, "he called in the help of opium; and he was gradually enslaved by this dangerous ally."

70. *Worth your Alexanders . . . what said Pitt*: Pitt made a speech in the House of Commons describing Clive as a born general, though trained to the desk instead of to arms, and showing a military genius which the King of Prussia might envy.

91. *This fell in my factor-days . . . slaving at St. David's*: when the English were driven from Fort St. George by the French, Clive had taken refuge at Fort St. David. This story of an incident of his life there Browning heard from Mrs. Jameson, who heard it from Macaulay at Lansdowne House shortly before. Macaulay refers to it in his "Essay," as follows: "Of his personal courage he had, while still a writer [clerk or factor], given signal proof by a desperate duel with a military bully who was the terror of Fort St. David."

112. *Thyrsis locked with Chloe*: pastoral lovers so out of place here as an allusion as to be an appropriate illustration of the utterly unexpected.

183. *Twenty-five years ago*: he died by his own hand in 1774, at the age of 49, the next week after telling this anecdote (see line 238). As it took place at St. David's when Clive was "one-and-twenty" (see line 198), there is a little discrepancy here.

222. *Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at the French-*

man's will: the English East India Company paid a yearly rent to the native princes who were so dominated by the French then that they were virtually French agents.

Mulýkeh. A graphic Bedouin folk-story of the unselfish love of Hóseyn, the Arab, for his matchless mare, Mulýkeh. Duhl in vain tempted his poverty by offering him a thousand camels for her; and his generosity, by craving her as a boon to save his son's life; but when Duhl stole her, and Hóseyn, mounted on her famous sister, had almost caught up to her, for she flagged through missing her master's wonted urging, then his loving pride in her, lest for once she be outspeeded, got the better of his sense of ownership, and he shouted to Duhl his secret way to call out her fleetness — and lost her forever.

34. *Her forefront whitens*, etc.: the Arabs considered it peculiarly fortunate if the white on the horse's forehead spread down to the lip; a white fetlock was also lucky.

61. *I swear by the Holy House*: the family of Mahomet.

Pietro of Abano is a revived version of a mediæval legend of the famous magician of Padua, whose varied abilities and substantial benefactions to the world earned for him the usual abuse accorded by the dull-witted and superstitious to the man in advance of his time. To him comes a young Greek who is canny enough to desire the wisdom and power which have given Pietro the name of dealing with the Devil, but who is not enlightened enough to appreciate the patient disinterestedness of such a man's life. The wily Greek offers him the love he lacks in exchange for the secret of his skill. For reply Pietro gives him a magic powder. It causes him, in an instant, before Pietro's "Benedicite" has time to be pronounced, to seem to live through the successive stages of the career he craves, as man of wealth, statesman, and churchman,

laying bare the duplicity which hid beneath his pretence of gratitude, the vanity and selfishness masking under the name of philanthropic leadership, and — as he wakes to see Pietro's smile and hear the banging of the door as the persecuted savant goes out and leaves him to himself — giving him a sudden glimpse of the merely spiritual rewards that the genuine lover of knowledge and mankind must be prepared to accept; since real love as a return for such labors is still a dream, and unconscientious cleverness more successful with the masses than with Pietro.

1. *Petrus Aponensis*: Peter or Pietro of Abano (1249–1315), Aponon being the ancient name of the famous medicinal springs of Abano, near Padua, derived from *a*, without, and *πόνος*, pain, near which Peter was born. He was professor of medicine at Padua, had studied at Paris and Constantinople and in the Orient, and was said to keep the seven spirits of philosophy, alchemy, astrology, physic, poetry, music, and painting in seven crystal vases tamed to his will. The Inquisition of 1306 cited him as heretic and atheist. His able defence caused his acquittal. In 1315 he was again cited, but died in time to escape conviction; and although his body was condemned and ordered to be burned, a friend hid it and the sentence was wreaked on his effigy. His statue was placed by the Duke of Urbino among other statues of illustrious men, and the Senate of Padua set it on the gate of the Senate-house. In 1560, in the Church of St. Augustine, a tablet with a Latin epitaph was put up in his memory, and the Rev. John Sharpe, whose paper on Browning's poem appears in the London Browning Society Papers, Part II., found in the wall of the vestibule of the Sacristy of the Church of the Eremitani this inscription: PETRI APONI/Cineres/Ob. an. 1315./aet. 66.

14. *Petrus ipse*: Peter himself.

39. "*Calculating*," *quoth he*: Browning's own note gives the Italian lines and a translation of his own.

Another version of his made for Father Prout, to which he refers, is given in Prout's "Reliques" as follows:—

"Studying my cyphers with the compass,
I find I shall soon be under the daisy;
Because of my lore, folks make such a rumpus,
That every dull dog is thereat *unaisy*."

43. *A galley needing neither sails nor oars, etc.*: whether Pietro is anywhere recorded to have anticipated the steamboat by such an invention as is here described, we have not been able to determine; but historians of the steam-engine place in Egypt, in Hiero of Alexandria's (120 B. C.) early experimentation in that direction, the origin of the idea which Pietro is here said to have worked into shape at Cairo; and since the researches of Arago and Figuier it is agreed that the theory of the power of locomotion by steam is very ancient, and that so also is the idea of substituting paddle-wheels for oars. Typically, if not actually, the poet is justified in attributing such a contrivance as he describes to so able and learned a man as Pietro was.

63. *He may not drink . . . milk*: this was one of the tales told of Pietro, indicating, as the Greek is made to suggest, that the learned magician's superiority isolated him from all ordinary social relations.

70. *True moly*: the herb with black root and "blossoms white as milk," which Homer says Hermes gave Odysseus as a charm against the spells of Kirke. "Odyssey," x. 367.

73. *Within my eye its iris mystic-lettered*: an Oriental superstition. Browning, in reply to a query as to the allusion, said that "there was an old superstition that, if you look into the iris of a man's eye, you see the letters of his name, or the word telling his fate."

74. *My ear — its swan-shaped cavity, my emblem*: the shapeliness of the ear has long been considered an

index of superiority, the curving lines of the inner part like a swan's neck showing the gift for leadership.

75. *The swan-like nature*: the Greeks called the swan the bird of Apollo (see line 20); and swans have long been an appanage of royalty not to be owned by the commonalty, being themselves supreme above the herd of birdkind. The Greek associates them here with leadership as a birthright.

109. *Petri en pulmones*: lo, the lungs of Peter!

118. *Ipse dixi*: I have spoken, or, So let it be, a phrase used at the end of a magician's mandate or of an argument.

124. *Michael of Constantinople, Hans of Halberstadt*: mediæval scientists and sages of Pietro's sort, as the Greek says; the second is before alluded to by Browning in his "Transcendentalism."

143. *Fiat*: decree; from the Latin, let it be done.

150. *De corde natus haud de mente*: born of heart, not of mind.

173. *Bene*: opening syllables of *Benedicite*, Peter's grace, of which the Greek hears so much before the opiate begins its work; the rest, *dicite*, later (line 409), when he wakes from the spell, having dreamed his dream out in the interval.

181. *Plato's tractate*: "The Republic," whose general aim as to ruling men may be summed up in a few words in book vi. (vol. ii. page 329, of Jowett's translation): "Let there be one man who has a city obedient to his will, and he might bring the ideal polity into being," that one man, it is understood, being wise and good and devoted to the highest Beauty. The Greek professes Plato's way of ruling men.

182. *Dog of Egypt*: Anubis, the dog-faced God of Egypt, of whom sagacity was the especial quality.

213. *Jezebel*: 2 Kings ix. 30.

214. *Jam satis*: enough now.

244. *That fabric, Padua's boast*: a hall in Padua in the Palazzo della Ragione, a vast building standing

upon open arches. It is said that when the original hall was rebuilt in 1306 by an Austin friar, Frate Giovanni, a great traveller, he asked no other pay for his work than the wood and tiles of the old roof which he was to take down. The interior of the hall is covered by strange mystical paintings designed by Giotto, according to the instructions of Pietro of Abano. The Greek suggests that this hall be the state-house of a new and better rule.

259. *Tantalus's treasure*: evanescent treasure, Tantalus being tortured in Hades by having drink and food forever escape his reach.

280. *Bare feet cling to bole with, while the half-mooned boot we boast*: the boot with a long curved toe, introduced in the eleventh century, sometimes so long as to be fastened up at the knee, which it was the privilege of men of rank and power to wear, while the bare plebeian feet were shod with the mud their soles accumulated.

287. *Dream Elysian*: the Elysian fields or islands of the blessed after death, which the Hellenic mythology opposed to Tartaros, the place of torment, seem to have been shadowy, warranting the illusory quality here belonging to Elysian. The Greek is taking the next step in his Platonic way of ruling men, to deceive their fancies as jockeys fool a horse.

291. *Per Baccho*: by Bacchus.

299. *Salomo si nôsset* (noisset): if Solomon had but known this.

304. *Teneor vix*: scarcely do I contain myself.

310. *Hactenus*: hitherto. The *e* made long for the rhyme's sake.

312. *Nec Ultra Plus*: no farther, the inscription graven by Herakles, according to the legend, on the Pillars of Herakles, now the rocks of Gibraltar, which he tore asunder to join the Mediterranean with the Atlantic.

335. *The crozier . . . the crowbill*: the one, the

shepherd's crook of the bishop, emblematic of spiritual sway; the other, — same as crowbar, — of sway over earth.

342. *Manna*: food from heaven. Exodus xvi. 15. — *Peason*: an Old English word for peas.

346. *Pou sto*: where I may stand; Archimedes saying, "Give me a place to stand, and I will move the world."

370. *The Lateran*: the Lateran Palace of the Pope adjoining the church of St. John Lateran in Rome, the head church since the days of Constantine.

374. *Gained the Purple*: the cardinalate, from the color of the hat, stockings, and cassock worn by cardinals. — *Bribed the Conclave*: the meeting of the Sacred College of Cardinals for the election of a new pope by a two-thirds vote on the tenth day after the Pope's death. — *Saw my coop ope*: the Cardinals who meet in this rigidly private election conclave have each a boarded cell, or coop, in the Vatican assigned by lot.

381. *Tithon*: brother of King Priam of Troy, whose beauty made Aurora fall in love with him and carry him to heaven. She asked the fates to make him immortal, but forgot to ask them to preserve his youth, and he became decrepit and begged to die. Not being able to grant this, she changed him into a grasshopper, according to Ovid, "Metamorphoses," 13.

395. *Conciliator Differentiarum*: Conciliator of Differences, Pietro's most famous work.

397. *De Speciebus Ceremonialis Magiæ*: Concerning the Kinds of the Ceremonial of Magic.

400. *The Fisher's ring or foot that boasts the Cross*: — the Pope's signet is the ring of the Fisherman after St. Peter. The cross is embroidered on his slipper.

407. *Apage, Sathanas*: avaunt, Satan!

408. *Dicam verbum Salomonis*: I command it in the name of Solomon. The name Sol-Om-On unites the name of the sun in three languages, and makes up a word to conjure by. — *Dicite*: the closing syllables of "benedicite." See line 174.

414. *Benedicite!* used here by the boy as a word of good omen.

415. *Idmen, idmen*: we know, we know!

420. *Scientiæ Compendium*: compendium of science.

421. *Admirationem incutit*: it inspires admiration.

426. *Axe and fasces*: an axe tied with a bundle of rods, — an old Roman badge of authority borne before a magistrate.

427. *Antipope*: usurper of the popedom.

433. *Tiberius*: (42 B. C.—37 A. D.), made Cæsar or Emperor of Rome 14 A. D.

439. *The . . . account . . . told by Suetonius*: according to Suetonius, in his "Lives of the Cæsars," when Tiberius "was marching to Illyricum, he called to consult the oracle of Geryon, near Patuvium [Padua]; and having drawn a lot by which he was desired to throw golden *tali* [dice] into the fountain of Aponus, for an answer to his enquiries, he did so, and the highest numbers came up. And those very *tali* are still to be seen at the bottom of the fountain."

441. *Venus*: the highest throw of the dice. This Roman term for a lucky throw Browning uses again in "At the Mermaid."

443. *Not sung! but lilted*, etc.: Browning gives the rhythm of the metre used, and reveals an unusual bit of personal information, that he often now hums out his metres.

Several variants of the story of a rapid ambitious dream like this of the Greek's are given in *Poet-lore*, iii. 577.

Doctor ——. A whimsical rendering of an old Hebrew tale illustrating the ancient proverb, "A bad wife is stronger than death." Satan complaining, on the one day allotted for such fault-finding, that he was wronged by the existence on earth of any rival power to that of his offspring, Death, God gives him leave to go and marry in the flesh, and see for himself if the proverb be justified. Upon doing this, and the time

coming for him to give his son a calling, he makes him a doctor, since he is too cowardly for a soldier, too lazy for a lawyer, and his father desires no peer in his own special calling — Divinity. His sufficient qualification for medicine is to be his ability to see his father in his spirit-person at the bedside of his patients. If he stand at the head, it will be safe to prophesy death, however slight the ailment; if at the foot, or elsewhere, any dose his son pleases to give will promise recovery. With this, Doctor — soon becomes infallible; but when called one day to cure the Emperor, Death persists in standing at the bed-head, his son vainly begging him for once to shift his place, and let him gain the fortune and the Princess the Emperor promises if he is cured; and then comes the test of the proverb. Remembering it, the son, under pretext of sending for a famous talisman, Jacob's-staff, summons his mother, and so defeats the Devil himself.

The legend is a curious reflex of the Alkestis story as seen through the eyes of Jewish prejudice against women. For a Greek variant of a part of the story, see "The Just One," in "Folk Songs and Tales from Modern Greece." *Poet-lore*, ix. 356.

89. *Galen*: a Greek physician (130–200).

140. *Machaon redivivus*: Machaon come to life again, — a celebrated physician accompanying the Greeks to Troy, was in the wooden horse, and cured Menelaus. See *Iliad*, ii. 889 and iv. 250.

168. *Meal of dust*: Genesis iii. 14 and ii. 7.

256. *Talmud*: from the Chaldee, meaning doctrine. The book of Hebrew law *Mishna*, and *Gemara*, tradition and comments.

Pan and Luna is a delicately limned night-picture in harmony with an antique nature-myth touched upon by Virgil. It portrays a black night in Arcadia, earth and sky fused in one, till the sudden moon sheds life and light everywhere while she flies unveiled across the sky, and, as if growing aware of the thirst for beauty

she arouses, hides her bare orb in a slow-sailing cloud-fleece, only to find that harbor of seeming purity a net of earth-breath, wherein the rude earth-god Pan catches and clasps her in his rough embraces. So happened all the legend intimates of the gift of pure-white fleeces Pan gave Luna, and of the first moon-eclipse.

The motto is the opening of the reference to the legend by Virgil, "if worthy of belief it is;" of the rest of Virgil's allusion Browning gives a translation in the words quoted in lines 97-100.

59. *Amphitrite's dome*: the sea, Amphitrite being the daughter of Oceanus and wife of Poseidon.

70. *The fact as learned Virgil gives it*: in the same Georgic. Browning's lines which follow give the sense of the passage.

Epilogue. A lyrical picture of the contrast between the popular notion of the poet's work, as quick-rooted and easy-growing, like an annual in a flower-garden, and its actual nature, strenuous and persistent in character and nurtured by obstacle, like a slow-growing pine-tree. How truly Browning rated the popular opinion of a poet was shown by the criticism that greeted this song, as if he had drawn a contrast between all other poets and himself. In copying the poem in the autograph album of a young American girl in Venice, October, 1880, he added the stanzas given on page 273 of the last volume of this edition in comment, both on this epilogue itself and on the misplaced criticism it had evoked. His explanation is that when he wrote it he was musing on his "betters, poets dead and gone," and he names Dante as a sufficiently appropriate illustration of the class of poet he had in mind, — a "nation's heritage."

JOCOSERIA

The title of this volume, writes Browning to a friend, "is taken from the work of Melander (Schwartzmann) [1571-1640, whose book is a miscellany of an-

ecdotes], reviewed, by a curious coincidence, in the *Blackwood* of this month [February, 1889]. I referred to it in a note to 'Paracelsus'" ["such rubbish as Melander's "Jocoseria"]. In another letter he speaks of the volume as "a collection of things *gravish* and *gayish* — hence the title 'Jocoseria,' — which is Batavian Latin, I think."

The Prologue may simply express that no beauty is perfect without its complement, love; or it may refer more particularly to Divine love, without which life is incomplete. The latter interpretation is rendered probable on account of the use of the term, "O comer," line 9, which the Rev. J. Sharpe points out is one of the titles of the Messiah in the New Testament. "*ὁ ἐρχόμενος*," the Future One, He who shall come 'Matthew xi. 3; xxi. 9; Luke vii. 19, 20; John xii. 13; (i. 14; xi. 27).

Donald. An anecdote of a sportsman told in a Highland bothie to a band of young Oxford fellows, when their adventures in praise of sport were going the rounds, in order to exemplify the cruel and degrading side of the sportsman's instinct. The teller of the story says he heard it from a ghastly wreck of a man, who burst into just such a merry bothie circle as theirs to tell how once, in taking the short cut over a mountain, at the narrowest part of the footway a stag blocked the path, and how, instead of butting him over the precipice, it halted, and understood the course that flashed upon him, — to let himself down flat and let the beast step over him. This it did, with slow, careful intelligence, when just as the creature stood above him the sportsman got the better of the man in him. He drew out his dirk and stabbed. Over the beast fell, the human beast on top, his life saved, however, by falling on the stag, but his bones so broken that he was a cripple the rest of his days, his only resource hobbling into hunting-bothies with the head and hide of the stag, to tell, for the sake of

the food and alms it brought him, his story of huge sport.

5. *Bothy*: a booth or hunting-box.

10. *Trivet*: or *trevet*, same derivation as "tripod," the three-footed support for a gypsy kettle.

12. *Glenlivet*: Scotch whiskey.

42. *Double-First*: the name at Oxford and Cambridge Universities for honors in two branches of study.

61. *Ross-shire*: the most mountainous of counties in the North of Scotland.

79. *Ben*: the usual Gaelic name for a mountain. — *With an end in "ich:"* the usual Gaelic termination; e. g., Ben Vorich.

133. *Volte-face*: turn face-about.

136. *Blondin*: the expert rope-walker.

207. *Goliath*: 1 Samuel xvii. 4.

211. *Tines*: forks of the horns.

234. *As Homer would say*, etc.: *Odyssey*, i. 63; literally, "teeth-fence."

The story is true, Mrs. Orr says, "repeated to Browning by one who had heard it from the so-called Donald himself." Sir Walter Scott tells it, in "The Keepsake" for 1832, substantially as Browning gives it, and as he also had heard it, with the exception that the mountaineer is going in quest of a sheep or goat missing from his flock instead of to meet a lassie at the bridge below, as Browning perhaps chooses to say. Sir Walter closes his account as follows: "I never could approve of [his] conduct towards the deer in a moral point of view, . . . but the temptation of a hart of grease offering, as it were, his throat to the knife, would have subdued the virtue of almost any deer-stalker."

Solomon and Balkis. An anecdote from the Talmud of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, in which they are represented as elaborately questioning each other in order to show off the regard for wisdom of the King, the regard for goodness of the Queen; till in the

midst of the fine talk the King's signet ring is accidentally revealed, bearing the Name that compels the truth to be told, whereupon the vanity that really dominates the King's wisdom, and the love of admiration and the fleshly attractions that really allure the Queen's heart are confessed by both, and their high converse on the plane of mind ends in a mere carnal kiss. The account of the visit of the Queen of Sabá or Yemen in Arabia to Solomon in 1 Kings x. 1-13, has its counterpart in many Oriental versions besides those of the Talmud. The Persian poet Jami writes on the same theme.

10. *Vulgo conster*: same as "construe," in vulgar or old-time English.

12. *Spheteron do*: his home.

28. *Wimple*: an old-fashioned kind of plaited hood.

32. *The Ring which bore the Name*: Solomon's signet ring, famed for its magical potency.

46. *Habitat*: the natural environment or home for a plant or animal.

47. *On Lebanon roots the cedar*: Isaiah ii. 13.

48. *Hyssop*: 1 Kings iv. 33; the caper (*Capparis spinosa*), or *asuf* of the Arabs.

Cristina and Monaldeschi is a monologue by Queen Cristina. She is recalling the love of King Francis for Diane de Poitiers while walking in the hall of Fontainebleau which bears tokens memorizing it, and ironically comparing their fidelity with her companion's treacherous love for her. More and more grimly, making use of images the pictures about them suggest to her, she intimates to him that his perfidy to her has been unmasked, while drawing him along with her to the "Gallery of the Deer," where she orders those who are to do her bidding to wreak upon him the vengeance of a wronged Queen.

Cristina of Sweden (1626-1689), daughter of King Gustavus Adolphus, vigorous and original by nature, brilliantly educated, and with marked scientific tastes,

succeeded to her father's throne in 1632, but refusing to tie herself in marriage to any one of her many royal suitors, and abdicating, in 1654, at Upsala, in order to lead an unfettered life (see lines 139-141), she went to live in Rome, where she indulged her lover Marquis Monaldeschi in all the honors and favors she could bestow, till he tired of her, sought other loves, ridiculed her, and betrayed her confidences, when she had him stabbed to death in 1658, at Fontainebleau, as the poem tells. By her Act of Abdication she retained sovereign jurisdiction over her servants; and the Marquis was one of these, her "Master of the Horse."

5. "*Quis separabit?*" who shall separate?—the motto inscribed on the frame of a picture, in the gallery of François Premier and Diane de Poitiers.

13. *Her Crescent with his Salamander-sign*: her emblem the crescent-moon of Diane and Diana the goddess; his the fire-fed salamander; both signs repeated in the decorations of the gallery, on whose symbolical meanings Cristina plays.

105. *Juno strikes Ixion*: the queen of heaven, whom Ixion presumed to offer his love to, according to the myth (see Browning's "Ixion," 79-83), here pictured as striking him. It is ominously pointed out by Cristina.

106. *Primatice*: Primaticcio, Francesco (1504-1570), painter of frescos at Fontainebleau.

107. *Florentine Le Roux*: the French way of naming the Florentine painter Rossi.

112. *Gallery of the Deer*: La Galerie des Cerfs in the Royal Château at Fontainebleau near Paris.

116. *Vowed at Avon*: a village near Fontainebleau. — *Blessed and cursed faith and falsehood*: the Queen asked Monaldeschi, it is said, what should be the penalty of a man who in a similar way betrayed a woman. He replied, "Instant death; 't would be an act of justice." "It is well," she rejoined, "I shall remember your words."

144. *Let Avon tell the rest:* that is to say, let his tomb blab now in Avon church, where his body was buried.

Mary Wollstonecraft and Fuseli: a piteous confession of a scorned and hopeless love, yet, although passionate, utterly incapable of vengefulness.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), pioneer in expressing the need of women for greater opportunity in life, is said by her earlier biographers, Godwin and Knowles, to have been ardently in love with Henry Fuseli the artist (1741–1825); by later biographers, C. Kegan Paul and Elizabeth Robins Pennell, this basis for the poem is denied.

Adam, Lilith, and Eve exemplifies the relations of two types of women to a typical man. A stroke of terror wrings the truth from them; the one who really loved him despite her haughtiness, and the other who married him despite her early love for another, confessing all. Their fear subsiding, they awake to their imprudence, and then pretend they were only fooling him, when he pretends that he knew they were, and so assures them that truth itself has made him no wiser than he was before.

Lilith, according to the Jewish tradition, was Adam's first wife, created when he was, while Eve was formed later from his rib (compare Genesis i. 26 and ii. 22). There is much the same difference attributed to them in Oriental legends as between the fierce Brunhild and the mild Gudrun of Norse mythology.

Ixion. The sinner Ixion is presented suffering eternal punishment in hell, and as the wheel rushes round, the torments of his flesh are transmuted into a rainbow (symbolic of the hope and aspiration that grow out of suffering). Ixion questions the justice of his torment. He first comes to the conclusion that sin is an aberration of sense, and merely the result of external conditions in which the soul of man has no active part. The soul simply dreams; but once fully awakened, it would free itself from this bondage of sense if it were

allowed to do so. He argues that Zeus made him, and if he has sinned it is through the bodily senses that Zeus conferred upon him, and if Zeus were the friendly and all-powerful god which he claimed himself to be and which Ixion believed he was, why did he allow these distractions of sense to lead to sin which could only be expiated by eternal punishment? Without body there would have been nothing to obstruct his soul's rush upon the real. With one touch of pitying power Zeus might have dispersed "this film-work, eye's and ear's." Thus it is the fault of Zeus that Ixion had sinned, and having done so will eternal torture bring about any further repentance than he already feels now that his eyes are open? Then follows a comparison between the actions of Zeus, a god, and of Ixion, the human king; and Ixion declares that could he have known all, as Zeus does, he would have warded off evil from his subjects, would have seen that they were trained aright from the first, — in fact, would not have allowed evil to exist, or, failing this, could he have seen the heart of the criminals and realized how they repented, he would have given them a chance to retrieve their past. What was his sin? It is that of arrogance. Ixion, a mere man, strives to be on an equality with gods. Zeus and Hera may be taken to represent the attributes of power and love as conceived by man in divinity. Ixion, as man, arrogantly supposes that he is capable of putting himself on an equality with divinity by entering into the entire nature of divinity, that out of his finite mind he can construct the absolute god; this is the sin, or aberration of sense, which results in his own downfall. Ixion, now aroused to the fact that the god he has been defying is but his own miserable conception of God, realizes that the suffering caused by his errors is the means through which man struggles toward higher ideals: through evil he is brought to a recognition of good, from his agony is bred the rainbow of hope which ever

shines above him glorified by the light from a purity far beyond, all unobstructed.

Ixion, in Greek mythology, was the son of Phlegyas and King of the Lapithæ. He married Dia, daughter of Deioneus, and promised to make his father-in-law certain bridal presents. To avoid the fulfilment of his promise, he invited Deioneus to a banquet, and there cruelly murdered him. He was shunned by all mankind, because no one would purify him for the murder, until Zeus took pity on him, carried him to heaven, and there purified him. But he made love to Hera, and so was banished, and at the command of Zeus Mercury tied him to a wheel which would eternally revolve.

15. *All, for a purpose of hate*, etc.: there are several mythical stories told of the hatred of Zeus for the human race. In one of them he deprived the human race of fire, which was regained for them by Prometheus; in another he destroyed the race by a deluge.

28. *Sisuphos*: "the crafty," having betrayed and then having tried to deceive Zeus, was condemned to eternal punishment in Hades, being forced forever to keep on rolling a block of stone to the top of a steep hill, only to see it roll down again. — *Tantalos*: was a favorite of the gods and allowed to share their meals; but he insulted them, and was condemned in Hades to stand immersed in water up to his chin, while over him hung delicious fruits. He suffered constant hunger and thirst; but when he opened his mouth the water dried up and the fruits vanished into the air.

36. *Heré*: same as Juno, queen of Heaven and wife of Zeus.

43. *Thessaly*: a country in the northern part of Greece.

73. *Forfeit thro' arrogance?* Pindar says of Ixion: "He found his prosperity too great to bear when with infatuate mind he became enamoured of Hera. . . . Thus his conceit drove him to an act of enormous folly,

but the man soon suffered his deserts, and received an exquisite torture."

85. *Olumpos*: a mountain in Thessaly. Upon its highest peak was supposed to be the throne of Zeus, and here he summoned the assemblies of the gods. — *Erebos*: the primeval darkness, usually applied to the lower regions, which are filled with impenetrable darkness.

112. *Tartaros-doomed*: doomed to Hell.

Jochanan Hakkadosh is a story singled out from other antique memorials, by the Rabbi who is supposed to tell it, as a tradition worthy of note. It relates how once, in a Persian city, all the faithful Jews were grieving over the approaching death of a sainted scholar, and his chief disciples were clamoring to get from the one soul competent to know it the real truth about life before he left them forever. Is age content to have youth go? Is the whole of life good? they ask. He cannot assure them so. Now, he says, when he's equipped fitly to descry the truth, being wise enough to play his part triumphantly in love, or war, or verse, or statesmanship, without mistaking external for real beauty in love, and without fighting or laboring for worthless ends, he sings the same sad song as the unwise lover, scholar, and warrior. When they had power to act, they had no wit. When they had wit to test their acts, they had no power. So, now, his wisdom but mocks him when he goes where no deeds are to be wrought. At this they resolve to try a means, permitted in some rare cases as his in whom such perfections meet, to lengthen to the fourscore years allotted man a life else to be cut off untimely at seventy-nine. Avoiding the error recorded of the cruel-kind friends of Perida, the famous teacher for whom they begged of Heaven five hundred years of weary life, the disciples of Jochanan are careful to choose from the throngs that eagerly offer pieces from their life to lengthen his, just enough to make up the year, a quarter-year each from the lives of a lover, warrior, poet,

and statesman. Whereupon Jochanan at once fell asleep and woke in health. At each quarter's end his chief disciple, Tsaddik, broke in upon him to get the lesson due. When in quest of how men should love, the Rabbi's quarter-year as lover only brought the lesson that love, being suited to youth's ignorance, had grown unsatisfactory to age, which had found out all its delusions long ago. War was more promising. But when Tsaddik returned the next quarter-year to learn what was the good of battle, the Rabbi's ripe wisdom was so at odds with the impulsive force that takes the short, upsetting way to good which the slow smooth way of peace would attain as well; so uncertain what absolute good is, anyway, since a hard and fast definition is absurd, and there is good to be got from submission to evil; and so disgusted with the blundering involving of so much more than was intended in the consequences of war, which cannot hit the good aim without accomplishing evil also, — that simply loving and spending merely one's self for one's desire seemed better, as he would show the world could he but be a poet. At the third quarter's end Tsaddik, nursing hope deferred, returns to find that the Rabbi has found the coldness of age and knowledge unfusible with the heat and hope of the poet. Reality seems better to age, which discredits the use of flying ideals in the realm of the future. Dreams cannot surpass the deeds of heroes, and to have sway as a statesman over the actual lives of men is the right field for wit and wisdom. Treasuring his last opportunity to get life's secret, Tsaddik comes at close of the fourth quarter eager to learn the management of men, how rich and poor may alike regard their inequality with indifference, and how to secure for underestimated worth the rewards poured out upon pretentiousness. But the Rabbi's superior acuteness and experience have only enabled him to appreciate the countless difficulties in directing a social course which are oc-

casioned by the thronging lesser growths of society. Not the prominent figures the eye of youth steers by needs statesmanship look out for, but the undistinguished brutal horde whose minds are so dense that none but the poet's way to affect them seems practical, for his light their gross intelligences need not comprehend to recognize. While he says this, another happier change comes over the Rabbi, which the frustrated Tsaddik supposes to be death.

The next day, news of a persecution disperses the faithful. When Tsaddik ventures to return, three months later, he marvels to find Jochanan still lingering. Did some one of the forward boys and girls in the crowd, whose clamor to lend the Rabbi pieces of their green lives had been contemptuously repulsed, somehow manage to put fresh breath in him? For the aged scholar is now thrilling with good cheer, his wise brain suffused with the freshness of a child's heart. In his eyes, all opposites are reconciled and fulfilled without nullification of any; for ignorance is now in him confirmed by knowledge. Good and evil, ideal and real, are no longer set at war with one another in the exacting, dissatisfying attempt to secure a prescribed net result; and life no longer seen brokenly, but whole from first to last, is perceived within the soul — and not outside in any material accomplishment by means of which it learns — to be all good, a source of never-ending ecstasy. He dies, yearning to impart the secret of his rapture to Tsaddik, on whom it is wasted; for he thinks he knows just how to account for it, and sees in it only an example of a curious passage in an old Hebrew writer, describing how the *Ruach*, or imparted spirit, may stay awhile in the bodies of great saints and while almost loosed from the dead flesh, and, neither earthly nor divine as yet, get a foretaste of heaven. So, too learned to apply Jochanan's words to this life, Tsaddik buries his body and bids his spirit depart hence.

2. *Mishna*: part of the Jewish Talmud, containing the laws and instances of them collected from the decisions and records of ancient Rabbis. The word means doctrine. — *The Jew aforesaid*: named in the title of the poem, who was the reputed author or transcriber of the Mishna. This Rabbi Yehudah, or Judah Hannasi (the Prince), born before 140, was called "Hakkadosh," or holy, and also, like the Rabbi of whom he tells, "Jochanan," or John. In a letter to Dr. Furnivall, April 10, 1883, Browning writes: "I got an American paper, last night, wherein there is repeated that Jochanan revived by 'a transfusion of blood.' There is not a word about such a thing; on the contrary, the account in the poem makes it impossible. How could the 'transfusion' bring experiences with it? or how could the boy's gift, 'which he threw and it stuck,' be taken in that manner? This comes of the critics reading attentively the criticisms of their brethren, and paying no attention at all to the text criticised. The writer of the article in *The Times* made the mistake first, and even the *Academy* article must needs follow him. The whole story is a fiction of my own, with just this foundation, — that the old Rabbins fancied that *earnest wishing* might add to a valued life."

5. *Schiphaz*: or Shiraz, see line 801.

12. *Eximious*: elect, from the Latin, *eximius*, picked out from the mass of men. — *Jochanan Ben Sabbathai*: unhistorical. Mary M. Cohen in the *Jewish Messenger*, March 4, 1887, says: "Browning does not here portray any individual man, but takes the names and characteristics of several rabbis, fusing all into a whole." That he had the idea of making his revelation typical of Jewish enlightenment is indicated in his intention, according to Joseph Jacobs in the *Jewish Quarterly*, to call the poem "Hakkadosh Jochanan," equivalent to "Saint John," as if this Saint Jochanan represented the spiritual essence of Judaism as Saint John that of

Christianity. Mr. Jacobs having pointed out, through a friend, the incorrectness of putting the adjective "holy" or "sainted" and the name in this order, the poet altered it.

49. *More luckless than stood David*, etc.: 1 Samuel xvii. 38-40.

60. *Moses' stick*: see Browning's own note, at the end of the poem, wherein he gives some specimens of the kind of writings contained in this Rabbinical treatise, but which is assumed here to contain, also, sharp moral lessons.

88. *Khubbezleh*: imaginary.

120. *Targums*: Chaldean paraphrases of the Old Testament, mixed with interpretations and illustrations.

122. *The Nine Points of Perfection*: nine, being a trine of the Trinity, was a mystical number; the antique ideas of it as the consummate figure Dante reflects in "Vita Nuova," ii., and in the structure of the "Divine Comedy," see also its close. Perfection is expounded in the Mishna tract, "Pirke Aboth," 5, according to Professor Toy, cited by Mr. Cooke.

143. *That apt olive-branch Tsaddik*: the olive was the emblem of wisdom and peace, of which Tsaddik was a likely offshoot. His name means "just." He is not historical.

148. *From Job down to Satam*: a dynasty of Jewish elders.

150. *Dob*: meaning "Bear," as the poet says, referring to the constellation known in English as the Great Bear, and also as *aisch* or *na'sh*, the bier, in Hebrew.

154. *Banoth*: meaning "daughters" in Hebrew, referring to the three stars in the handle of the dipper in the constellation of the Bear.

156. *The East-cone*: the Pole-star about which the constellation of the Bear seems to revolve without setting like the constellations elsewhere in the heavens; and so, says Tsaddik, they may postpone the setting

of the dying man by making his bier revolve about the fixed centre, the place of peace.

160. *Salem*: the Hebrew word meaning "peace," as in Jeru-salem, the city of Peace, and the symbol of a more mystical place of Peace, the New Jerusalem of holy souls of which the Jew dreams.

168. *Those Old Just Ones*: ten Jewish martyrs who suffered persecution under the Emperor Hadrian.

175. *Akiba*: a Rabbi of the second century, who was one of these ten martyrs, and, according to the Mishna, suffered death under the iron comb, as the poem tells, while repeating the "Shema," declaring God's unity.

177. *Jischab*: Prof. C. H. Toy, cited by Mr. Cooke, says that Jischab does not appear in the list of martyrs given in the Talmud ("Gemara," tract "Aboda Zara"), but Joshobeb, who is given there, may be meant for Jischab, as in Hebrew the names differ but by one consonant, — יִשָּׁב and יִשָּׁב.

186. *Selah*: the word often appearing between Psalms (e. g. Psalm lxvii.), and over whose original meaning scholars have spent research and conjecture in vain. It was used, possibly, for *forte*, louder, or in antiphonal or responsive singing, as a sort of a musical cue to indicate, when one choir or chorister had finished, that the other might begin.

188. *Plant our lion-flag once more on Zion's mount*: the standard of the lion of the tribe of Judah on Mount Zion, on which Jerusalem was built, which David first took from the Jebusites (see 2 Samuel v. 6-9). Zion means in Hebrew "sunny."

210. *The appointed Fourscore*: Psalm xc. 10.

215. *Perida*: the story here told is so recorded in the Talmud, except that the repetition of the lesson to the stupid pupil is four hundred times, when a voice from on high (or a Bathkol, literally, "daughter of the voice") proclaimed that four hundred years should be added to Perida's life.

221. *Uzzean*: an adjective formed from Uz, where Job, the ensample of all patience, lived.

231. *Nil*: Latin for "nothing."

256. *Rudesby*: a rude boy, an obsolete word, formed from *rude* and *boy*. "Twelfth Night," iv. 1, 55.

354. *Sycamine*: a variety of fig-tree.

396. *Djinn*: the Arabic word for a "genie," a gnome.

413. *Edom's children*: the Gentiles, or the children of Rome, in Jewish speech; that is to say, the Christians.

414. *Sic Jesus vult*: so Jesus bids. Matthew v. 36.

474. *Joshua-like*, etc.: Joshua x. 12, 13.

539. *Samsons* (Judges xiv.-xvi.), *Abners* (2 Samuel ii., iii.), *Joabs* (1 Samuel xxvi. 6), *Judases*: captains and leaders, like the preceding, of the name of Judah, of whom there are a number in the Jewish scriptures, from Judah, son of Jacob (Genesis xliii. 3), to the Juda of Ezra (iii. 9).

560. *Ahithophel*: meaning "brother of folly," the conspirator with Absalom against King David. 2 Samuel xv. 31.

578. *Sons of Shimei*: 2 Samuel xvi. 5-8.

585. *Alkahest*: the universal solvent sought by Paracelsus and all alchemists.

612. *Mizraim*: a name for Egypt, derived from Mizraim, son of Ham.

613. *Goshen*: the district in Egypt settled by the Israelites. Genesis xlv. 10.

670. *Shushan*: the Hebrew word for lily.

721. *Tohu-bohu*: without form and void. Genesis i. 2.

759. *A rape . . . on air*: the myth of Ixion, who, meaning to embrace Heré, embraced instead, by the craft of Zeus, a cloud shaped like her.

777. *Halaphta*: several Talmudic teachers bore this name. Perhaps here a typical name for any erudite Jewish writer.

780. *Ruach*: the spirit imparted to man, as Browning says; literally, the "breath." Genesis ii. 7.

801. *Bendimir*, in *Farzistan*: the river Bundemeer,

flowing into the Persian Gulf in this Persian province.

Browning's Note. In a letter to a friend Browning explained that "The two Hebrew quotations (put in to give a grave look to what is mere fun and invention), being translated, amount to: (1) 'A Collection of Many Lies;' and (2) an old saying, 'From Moses to Moses arose none like to Moses' (*i. e.* Moses Maimonides)." Of course, to say that this story of Jochanan can have no better authority than the Rabbinical yarns exemplified in the three following "tall" stories, is to say that it must not be taken as based on authenticated records, although historic details are employed to contribute toward a result poetically true to the Judaism here depicted.

Never the Time and the Place. A song of longing for a loved Presence, lacking under friendly conditions of time and place, and only to be supplied now under unfriendly conditions in a dream and within the grave, yet towards which the love whose power the lover's Past has known shall be able to guide his Future.

Pambo is a sportive epilogue, jocoserious in its implications, to suit the volume it concludes. The story told indicates the absurdity of expecting effort to be put forth without action and thereby offence. Pambo spends a lifetime devotedly trying to reconcile premeditated acceptability with actual speech. The poet suggests that this is his case, too. Though he keeps his original aim steadily in view, and ceaseless matures his art, his expression rouses the same old criticisms, because his qualities are inseparable from his aim.

This story of Pambo, who was a saint of the fourth century, is told in Socrates' "Ecclesiastical History," book iv. chapter 23, and in Wanley's "Wonders of the Little World," in the form used in the poem as follows:—

"Pambo came to a learned man, and desired him to teach him some Psalm; he began to read to him the

Thirty-ninth, and the first verse, which is: 'I said, I will look to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.' Pambo shut the book, and took his leave, saying, 'he would go learn that point.' And having absented himself for some months, he was demanded by his teacher, 'when he would go forward?' He answered, 'That he had not yet learned his old lesson, to speak in such a manner as not to offend with his tongue.'"

2. *Crambo*: an old English game of capping rhymes in which double and triple rhymes like the rhymes in "Pambo," were in request.

16. *The Nine-and-thirtieth*: "I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue," — first verse of this Psalm.

50. *Arcades sumus ambo*: we are both Arcadians. Virgil, *Eclogues*, vii.







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